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THE

LIFE

OF

HENRY BIDLEMAN BASCOM, D.D., LL.D.,

LATE BISHOP OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH.

BY REV M. M. HENKLE, D.D.

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REV BISHOPS SOULE,

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AND PAINE:

Rev. and Honored Brethren:

SINCE through your influence, in a great measure, I was induced to resume the difficult task of writing the life of your late distinguished episcopal colleague, after I had abandoned the undertaking, it seems most proper that I should commend to your patronage and indulgence the work which has come into existence through the influence of your counsel. This is done as a tribute of respect *personally* and *officially*, and especially for the confidence indicated by your willingness to intrust so important and difficult a work to my hands; and with the earnest hope that you may neither find your confidence misplaced, nor the glory of your eminent colleague's well-earned fame tarnished or compromitted by the imperfect performance of the work assigned to

Your unworthy brother,

M. M. HENKLE.

PREFACE.

HAD Dr. Bascom left a record of the principal incidents of his eventful life, the task of his biographer had been comparatively easy, and his posthumous fame might have been well guarded; but as he kept no diary, — except during two or three brief periods, — no copies of the numerous letters written by himself, and acted as if he intended to prevent his biography from being written, rather than to afford any facilities for the compilation of his personal history, his biographer has been left to gather up material for the work, from miscellaneous sources, and by piece-meal; but chiefly he has been compelled to depend on his own personal knowledge and recollection of the events of Dr. Bascom's life. This state of things has rendered the execution of the work difficult, and the work itself, doubtless, in some degree, imperfect. There were in the life of Bascom, numerous incidents of deeply interesting character, which would have greatly enriched his biography; but as the knowledge of them was scattered throughout the country, and in the keeping of persons who did not choose to furnish them at the call of his widow and his biographer, the work had to proceed with such material as could be rendered available. But even under these circumstances of disadvantage, there has been collected such a fund of valuable matter respecting the life and character of this great man, as ought not to be lost.

Dr. Bascom was a *character*, — original, distinct, *sui generis*, — exhibiting points of imperfection, of course, but at the same time, possessing many and extraordinary excellencies; — a man whose biography ought to be given to the world, for the gratification of his numerous friends, and the profiting all who read. In the wonderful

powers and achievements of his great intellect, he is an object of admiration and astonishment; and in his untiring industry and perseverance in the pursuit of knowledge, — in his burning zeal and devotion to the cause of God, — in his active benevolence, his filial affection, and his pious and confiding trust in the providence of God, he presents an example worthy of universal imitation. If he had faults, obstinate persistence in the wrong was not one of them, for though he was a giant in intellect, he was a child in docility and readiness to receive correction from his friends.

That the portrait herein given of this prince in Israel is imperfect, is readily admitted, not only from the paucity of material, but the lack of ability on the part of the biographer, — for only a mind like Bascom's could accurately take the measure of his greatness: and yet, we have good hope that this volume may prove both interesting and useful to the reader. And that it may, is the earnest wish and fervent prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

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HENRY BIDLEMAN BASCOM was the son of Alpheus and Hannah Bascom, and was born May 27, 1796. As to his birth-place, a number of conflicting statements have been published since his death, some of which are singularly apocryphal and absurd. On the authority of four or five of his near relations and early school-mates, and particularly of a venerable relative who is intimate with his family history, we are, however, able to settle this matter correctly and with certainty. He was born on the east bank of the east branch of Delaware river, in the town of Hancock, Delaware county, New York, two miles

from the junction of the east and west branches of the Delaware, and two from (the now) Chehocton village, on the New York and Erie railroad.

Respecting his paternal ancestors, he says: "It would seem from family records and tradition, that I am paternally descended from a French Huguenot family, which, driven from France by the revocation of the edict of Nantz, settled in one of the border counties near the Clyde. It appears further, that three brothers, descendants of this family, during the civil disturbances and religious oppression which drove so many of the English Puritans from the land of their birth, emigrated to the then new and feeble colonies of North America. Two of the brothers remained; the third, being dissatisfied, removed to one of the English West India islands. The remaining two settled in Massachusetts. Subsequently a division of the family removed to New York; of that branch of the family I am a descendant."

I have before me a genealogical table of the Bascom family, going back to the year 1650, in which year "Thomas Bascom came from the north of England, and settled in Northampton, Massachusetts;" and a letter from the father of H. B. Bascom to his son, dated 1825, not only recognizes New England as the land of his ancestors, but as his own native place. Speaking

of a contemplated tour of his son, he says to him: "I hope you will get to New England, and see my native country — I never expect to see it," &c.

Of his mother, Mr. Bascom gives the following general account: "My mother was a German of the Bidleman family, of Greenwich, New Jersey. Her education, training, language and habits, however, were English. She was naturally sensible and sprightly; a woman of ardent feelings, but of strong and ingenuous purpose, combining in no ordinary degree natural vivacity and playfulness of temperament, with great resolution and decision of character. My mother owed nothing to the philosophy of modern refinement, and was too ambitious not to regret it; yet I have known few women who possessed a larger share of the poetry of feeling."

Mr. Houk, the aged relative referred to before, gives a fuller and more detailed account of her: "Hannah Houk, the mother of H. B. Bascom, was born in Greenwich, Sussex county, N. J., opposite Easton, Pa., in 1772. Her father's name was George Houk, and the maiden name of her mother, Rosanna Bidleman. In 1788, they removed to Sullivan county, N. Y., and about three years afterwards to Hancock, Delaware county, N. Y., (the place described above as Mr. Bascom's birth-place.) Soon after settling in the last

named place, Hannah was married to Alpheus Bascom, and they settled on the same farm with her parents, not more than a stone's throw distant, where the late Bishop Bascom was born. A large pile of rough stones, the rude remains of the fallen chimney, still marks the spot where the noble and eloquent H. B. Bascom first breathed the vital air.

"To know Hannah Houk Bascom was to love her. In dress she was neat, in her manners easy and affable, exact in her domestic duties, a kind and gentle wife, an affectionate mother, ever ready to administer the balm of comfort to the cast down and afflicted,—and many a hunter and raftsman, weary and hungry, has had abundant reason to implore the blessing of heaven on Mrs. Bascom; their reception was always cordial and welcome; and the weary traveler was sure of a home under her roof. Her character was without spot or blemish throughout her life."

Mr. and Mrs. Bascom had eight children,—Elizabeth, Henry Bidleman, Clara, Sylvanus, George, Alpheus, Hiram Baxter, and Lewis. By a second wife Mr. Bascom, Sr., had one child—John Ellis; and by a third wife, three—James, Samuel, and Hannah Houk—in all twelve.

Young Bascom gives the following account of his juvenile years:

"My personal recollections extend far back. I

have distinct and vivid recollections of numerous occurrences connected with the fourth year of my life. During infancy and childhood my health was perfect, and my physical development rapid and steady. I can never forget that the early elements of enjoyment were sought and found in perpetual activity; running, leaping, climbing, and the like, were my daily tactics, my meat and drink. The love of adventure was a passion, and its chances always led me into temptation. My adventures were rarely shared by another; an enthusiastic love of nature led me to seek solitude and to shun society. Social mischief I never was addicted to. I was from nature averse to it; the usual petty or more serious crimes of childhood I rarely ever committed. But I was not without faults, by any means—I was passionate and indocile. I met restraint with great impatience, and was too much inclined to rely upon my own impulses as correct. Fearful and startling were my struggles when a mere child, between my own sense of what was right and allowable, and the very different decisions of parental authority. To my parents I was never disobedient, my affection for them always held me more than the strength of law."

Mr. Houk, who knew him from infancy, says, "His character in boyhood was irreproachable; he was ever kind and forgiving to his playmates, and faithful to any trust committed to his keeping;

but his great delight was in rafting small floats and sporting in the clear waters of the Delaware."

Of his early years and habits, I find the following reminiscence on a loose scrap of paper, dated August, 1814: "while sick, I reviewed the scenes of my childhood. I was born on the banks of the Delaware, where my parents lived nineteen years. The beautiful river rolled down in front of my father's dwelling, offering a thousand scenes for recreation and amusement—huge rocks of all forms and magnitudes, beautiful pebbles of various colors and qualities, with which to amuse myself, the privilege of wading, bathing, plunging, sporting in the clear waters of the Delaware, or catching the finny tribes with hook and line; or casting these aside, I climbed the crags, and plucked the wild cherries, the haw, the fragrant plum, then to the field to seek the luscious melon, and then to crown all, returned pressed down with my mellow load to present it to my parents, and their little prattlers."

"When about five years of age"—says Mr. Bascom—"I was placed at a school taught by a Miss Leonard, a maiden lady. Here I soon learned to read, so as to take great delight in juvenile books, and in a few months was familiar with the *primerology* of the times and neighborhood. Beyond this, however, I could be taught nothing in that school. When about

seven years old, I was placed at a somewhat better school, taught by a Mr. May. He was, judging from my recollection, a good common school teacher, and advanced me considerably in reading, writing, &c. He was, however, very severe in his discipline, and chastising me most unmercifully upon a time, after I had been with him several months, I fled, from him in great anger, and ran several miles home to my father's house without stopping."

When he was about eight and a half years of age, as it appears, Mr. Bascom's parents were visited by a relation of the family, Henry Bidleman, Esq., who being pleased with Henry, he proposed that, as the boy had his name in part, if they would add the *Bidleman*, giving his name in full, he would take him home and send him to school. The proposal was agreed to, and Henry went home with Mr. Bidleman, who resided at Easton, Pa. At that place he went to school for sometime, or rather at Greenwich, for it appears from his own statement that the school was on the Jersey side of the river.

"The country Academy at which I was now placed, was taught by Mr. John T. Simpson, a most estimable man, as well as admirable teacher. Here I remained until I was about eleven years old, and my progress in the rudimental learning of the school was, I believe, entirely satisfactory to those

interested in my welfare. From this date until I was twelve years old, I was the pupil of Mr. Henry Evans, of whom I have ever cherished the most grateful recollections. After my separation from this excellent teacher, I was never at school again."

Here we have the whole amount of Mr. Bascom's school education. But from even this amount a deduction must be made. Mr. Houk informs us, that those first schools attended by him, were kept up only "two or three months in the year." If, then, we assume that the actual time of his attending the first school was six months, and the second the same; say two and a half years at most with Mr. Simpson, and one year with Mr. Evans, the whole sum would be less than five years. Paul S. Preston, Esq., a school mate of Mr. Bascom, says that one of his teachers declared to him that "Henry Bascom was the most apt student that ever came to his school."

Mr. Bascom's parents removed from his native place, where they had resided nineteen years, to Little Valley, on the Alleghany river, below Olean, Olean Point, in Western New York, in 1808. This must have been the date of their removal, for he tells us explicitly that it occurred when he was twelve years old, which, as he was born in 1796, was in 1808. "It is true," he says in a letter to his old friend, Mr. Preston, written in 1824, "my father removed to the west in 1812," but this must be

understood of his removal from western New York to the further west — to Kentucky and then to Ohio; for we shall presently find positive evidence that he was in western New York at an earlier date than 1812, and that in that year he removed to Kentucky.

Eighteen hundred and ten or eleven appears to have been the year of his conversion; but there is not perfect harmony among the witnesses as to the exact time and circumstances of that event. Rev. James Gilmore, who was intimate with Mr. Bascom from the age of ten years, says, that on his return to Little Valley in 1811, he learned that a little before this "A Methodist exhorter from the east had moved to the Little Valley, and through his instrumentality almost all the families of the valley had embraced religion, young *Henry* with the rest." Rev. Loring Grant, in a letter to me under date March 14, 1851, gives the following as his understanding of the matter: — "In the spring of 1811 Mr. Gilmore and young Bascom came into the waters of Sugar Creek, in what is now Bedford county, Pa. I knew but little of him until the time referred to by brother Burch, when preaching at Capt. Clark's, at Old Sheshegoin. The young man came *ten miles* on *foot* to attend the meeting. While preaching, I noticed in him deep feeling, and in the class-meeting he told us that during the meeting, or under the sermon he had found peace

with God, and offered himself for membership in the church, and was received."

This seeming disagreement is reconcilable by supposing that no church organization existed on the extreme frontier where Henry was really converted, and this is nearly certain from the statements of Mr. Gilmore; — and that when the young stranger appeared in Mr. Grant's congregation under 'deep feeling,' and in class-meeting professed to have received a great blessing, and then offered himself for membership, it was very natural that Mr. Grant should conclude that this was his first public profession of religion. That this was a misapprehension, however, is evident, for before this time Mr. Gilmore had become satisfied with the soundness of Henry's religious experience, and had called on him to exhort in public, — as we shall see presently, from Mr. Gilmore's very interesting narrative of the events of that spring and summer.

In my mind then it is settled, that young Bascom was converted in Little Valley, in the year 1810, and the first opportunity he had of uniting with the church was in the spring of 1811, at Old Sheshegoin, under the ministry of Rev. Mr. Grant.*

* Since writing the foregoing I have found a scrap in Bascom's own handwriting, which settles this point; it reads as follows: — "August 18th, 1814,—four years to-day since my conversion. Bless God for mercy through Christ our Lord. Henry B. Bascom." This fixes the date of Mr. Bascom's conversion at August 18th, 1810.

CHAPTER II.

FROM HIS CONVERSION TO HIS SETTLEMENT IN OHIO.

Wild state of the Country, and want of Advantages—Enters into an Arrangement with Mr. Gilmore to Work and Study with him—Their Journey over the Mountains, Incidents and Sufferings—Holds Religious Meetings—Henry begins to speak in Public, and astonishes the people — Difficulties and Opposition — Rapid Improvement—Separates from Mr. Gilmore and returns home—Diligence in Cultivating his Mind — Removal to Kentucky, and then to Ohio—Labors on the Farm, and for means of entering the Ministry.

We now return to notice the circumstances under which his Christian career was begun, and the disadvantages with which he was surrounded.

Mr. Bascom says:—"When I was twelve years old, a reverse in the pecuniary circumstances of my father induced him to remove westward, and settle in a wilderness surrounded by savages. A section of twenty miles did not contain more than half a dozen families. But even here I was cheerful and happy, perpetually indulging in dreams and aspirations connected with the future. My information was necessarily limited, and the means of increasing it equally so; but this did not damp my natural ardor of feeling in pursuit of whatever could amuse or excite me. I was passionately fond of reading and writing, and to these exercises

I applied myself with a perseverance which I know not how to account for."

Rev. Mr. Gilmore gives the following account of the population of that region at the date in question: — "At the Olean Point, there were but two log cabins at that time, which is now quite a large village. From the Olean, it was about twenty miles down to the Little Valley, though we strike the Indian lands before we come to that place. This reserve stretches about forty miles up and down this beautiful stream, (the Alleghany,) which belongs to the Seneca tribe. From our settlement, it was about fifteen miles down the river to the next settlement of whites. This is at the mouth of the Kangua creek (Fish creek.) Perhaps there were about ten or twelve families there at that time. From the Kangua, it was about twelve miles down to another settlement, called Warren, Pa., where the Conewango falls into the Alleghany, where there were but three or four houses at the time, which is now a very populous village. North of the Little Valley, it was thirty miles through the wilderness to a settlement at the mouth of Cattaraugus creek, on lake Erie.

"Here, then, we see, that this boy, who has since shaken vast assemblies by his oratory, and astonished the world with his greatness, was at that time in almost a howling wilderness, and virtually surrounded by the red men of the forest.

Mr. Gilmore was himself a very young man, having scarcely reached his majority, of but little religious experience, and small attainments; for pecuniary means, his reliance was on the labor of his hands as a pump and aqueduct maker. He had loved Henry from a little boy, but now he loved him as a brother in the Lord, and feared to leave him unprotected in his spiritual infancy, on that dangerous and wild frontier. He therefore, though but an exhorter himself, proposed to take Henry into business with him, with the understanding that he was not only to teach him the art and mystery of aqueduct making, but to render all the aid in his power to make Henry himself an aqueduct for the communication of the waters of life to the thirsty children of earth. This arrangement being settled, it was agreed to spend the season on the waters of the Susquehanna, as more eligible in all respects for their objects, than the uninhabited frontier where they then were. But an account of the preparation, the journey, and its sequences, will be best given in the language of Mr. Gilmore:

"As I designed to visit the scattered settlements along down the river as far as Warren, I invited young Henry to accompany me, which he did; and this gave me a more proper opportunity of becoming acquainted with him, his

Christian experience, and the impressions of his mind; and by conversing with him freely, I was convinced that he was moved upon by the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel of Christ. But what could he do in this unsettled country, where there were few to talk to, except the Indians? I believe that Henry told me, that he had been once through to the Cattaraugus, thirty miles, to hold meetings among the people. When I came to survey the many difficulties by which he was surrounded, and knowing that he was young in experience, and unacquainted with the ways of the world, and the deep gins of the enemy, I thought in all human probability, if he remained in that wilderness, that he would backslide and become useless in the world. I therefore told Henry that he had better go and spend the summer with me, on the Susquehanna river, and I would assist him all I could. He told me that he would go, if his father would give him liberty. So after we returned again back to the Little Valley, I conversed with his father on the subject, and after telling him what I thought about the duty of his son, and the great improbability of his accomplishing anything in that wilderness, he finally gave his consent for Henry to go and spend the summer with me.

"Did God move the heart of Pharaoh's daughter to command her maiden to take the

ark from among the flags and convey it to the shore, which contained the child that God raised up to manhood, who afterwards astonished the hosts of Israel by his wisdom? So we see that God can accomplish a great work with a small instrument. After closing my visit among my friends, we prepared ourselves for the intended journey; designing to follow the Alleghany, in its meanderings, to its head waters, pass over the dividing grounds, and strike the head waters of Pine creek, which puts into the Susquehanna, the distance of which is about seventy miles. The first night on our way, we called on Father Arthur, about six miles above Olean Point, at the mouth of the (then called) King's creek.

"We held a meeting among the people in the evening, and next morning we made our way up the river, picking our way as well as we could along its banks, without any road to guide us. When we arrived at the confluence of the Alleghany and Potatoe creek, about twenty miles above the Olean, we found that two families had made their way from Rice creek into that wilderness. As our stock of provision was exhausted, we called at the first house we came to, and asked the lady of the house if she could supply our wants. The kind woman baked us two small unleavened cakes, in a pan, and as we were very hungry, we soon

consumed one of them. We then pursued on five miles, to the next house, and got the privilege of staying with them over night, and started the next morning on our way before breakfast. We then had thirty miles to travel over the mountains, without any house.

"After we had traveled till about ten o'clock the next day, we stopped and ate our other cake, having then twenty miles farther to travel, before we reached the settlement. We now made what speed we could, knowing that we must suffer much with hunger before we got through, and perhaps be compelled to lodge among the mountains all night, in the bargain. When we arrived within about ten miles of Pine creek, we became very faint and weary, and sat ourselves down on a log to rest. I suppose that young Henry thought this rather a hard beginning in his itinerant career. We had sat there but a few minutes before we saw a man pursuing our footsteps, with great haste. He came up, all bathed in sweat, and commenced telling us how hard he had traveled to overtake us, and added, 'My mother, who gave you the small cakes yesterday, started me off very early this morning, with some provisions for you, fearing that you would faint before you got through the wilderness.' He then opened his pack, and richly supplied our wants. The young man said he

would accompany us through to the settlement, and take another day to return home again.

"We reached Pine creek on Saturday evening, and called on a religious family and told them to invite in their neighbors the next morning, and we would address them. This we did, and as the people in that place were almost entirely destitute of the gospel, our feeble efforts had a very salutary effect upon their minds. Here we were solicited by a gentleman, to hold a meeting ten miles ahead, at Wellsborough—he going ahead to give out the appointment. We staid and dined with this friendly family, and then went on to our next appointment; and when we arrived, we found a large school house filled with people awaiting our arrival.

"Here I preached from these words 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation.' Heb. ii, 3; and surely God blessed the work. After I had brought my subject to a close, I turned around to ask Henry to exhort the people; but as he looked very pale, and believing it arose from the idea of bearing a great cross, I told him that he need not speak to the people unless he pleased. But he tremblingly spoke and said, 'O, I think I will try it.' He arose, and with a great deal of pathos and native genius, he poured down a storm upon the people. I was astonished to hear him use the language which he did. He rolled it off

as with thunder peals. Here I evidently saw that he was a boy possessing more than ordinary powers of mind, and promised great usefulness to the world, if faithful to his trust. From Pine creek, we made our way on to Sugar creek, Pa. Here I arranged my business to spend the summer. I took a large job of supplying a man's house and yards with water by aqueduct. After I had got my work arranged for the summer, we then procured what books we could for reading; but as it was not a day of books, (of the right kind,) our reading was very much limited; but we resolved, at least, that part of our time should be spent in improving our minds.

"At that time we both had many difficulties to encounter, meeting with opposition from some of the leading members of the church, and the world too; but as I had then commenced trying to preach, and was a little in advance of Henry, in point of experience and knowledge too, he not only depended on me as a guide, but also looked up to me for knowledge. And as I had acquainted myself with the doctrines of Methodism, I took much pains to explain these doctrines to young Henry, that he might make no mistake as to his starting point. I knew that it was necessary, in order that a man or a minister be useful in the world, and land correctly himself in the end, that he not only become acquainted with, but also that

he imbibe, proper principles. I therefore explained to him the fall of man, the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ, the design of the operation of the Spirit of God upon the mind, and also the great design of the gospel of the Son of God, which was to save a lost world from ruin.

"I found Henry to have a very inquiring mind, anxious to learn all he could, in order that he might distinguish between truth and falsehood. When an impression was made on his mind, time could scarcely erase it; for he possessed the greatest power to commit and retain anything, of any person I ever saw. His power of association was very strong, and his apprehensions very vivid.

"I had my appointments out in different parts of the country, at which time I endeavored to preach to the people, after which Henry would always exhort; and it was evident that the ascent of his mind was very rapid. What he read at his leisure moments, he would be almost constantly repeating when at his work, except when we were in conversation together. He was firm and bold, yet modest in his appearance.

"Some of the people complained, and said that Gilmore and Bascom prayed half their time, and yet made two or three dollars per day. The truth was, our earning that amount did not disturb the people as much as our praying, neither did our praying affect them as did our public exercises;

for wherever we held meetings, the houses were crowded to overflowing; for it was something of a novelty with the people, to hear a boy but fifteen years old, (as that was his age at that time,) pour such a flood of deep and searching truth upon the congregation, as he often would.

"The jealousy of many of the local preachers in these parts was excited, not only by the loss of their congregations, but in the thought that these mere boys were their rivals. This jealousy was particularly bitter towards my young colleague, as it was thought a boy of but fifteen summers must, of necessity, be wholly incompetent to instruct the people in the deep principles of religious truth. But the young hero was steady to his purpose, exhorting in season and out of season.

"We passed the summer very agreeably together, although we encountered adverse winds and tides, and almost overwhelming seas; yet, that omnipotent arm which upholds universal empire, supported us amidst our peril. When we came to close up our summer's labor, it was evident, even to the public, as far as they had been acquainted with Henry, that he had risen in point of improvement fifty per cent. He had now acquired a very good knowledge of the doctrines of the gospel, and he was prepared to defend those doctrines."

Separating from his friend Gilmore, probably

about the end of the summer of 1811, he recrossed the mountains and returned to his home in Little Valley. The remainder of this year he appears to have devoted chiefly to the increasing of his stock of knowledge. Mr. William Connelly, still residing, — or at least was so recently, at Franklin, Pa., not far from Little Valley, became acquainted with young Bascom after his return from the east, and being greatly pleased with him, invited the youth to make his house his home, and tendered him the free use of a good library. This was a great treat to young Henry, for with a craving appetite for knowledge, he had hitherto enjoyed but small facilities for ministering to its gratification; and he never forgot this kindness of Mr. Connelly, who, in after life, received many a valued letter from the famed orator as the reward of his courtesy to the untutored youth of the wild frontier.

Mr. Connelly seems to be under the impression that at the date in question, and when Bascom was fifteen years of age, he was just then learning to read. He may have been attending to the improvement of his reading, but that he was able to read, and was a greedy reader at an earlier date than this, we have explicit evidence not only in the statement of Mr. Gilmore, but of himself.

By this time he had got a taste of the tree of knowledge, and his appetite for its enlightening

fruit, was eager and insatiable: there was no privation, no labor, no peril he would not encounter for the attainment of knowledge, or even for the means — the instrument of its attainment.

In 1812, and from known facts it must have been quite early in that year, the Bascom family removed from Little Valley to Maysville, Ky., or to some point in the immediate vicinity of that place. Here they could have remained but a brief period, for before the close of that year they crossed the river, and settled permanently in Ohio, about five miles from Maysville, in the line of direction from that place to Ripley, O.

During this period, Henry appears to have fully employed his time, in aiding his father in his labor, and in earning all that he could to prepare for carrying out his grand object of preaching the gospel,—in gleaning knowledge from every accessible source, and in exercising his talent in exhortations and other public services.

CHAPTER III.

LICENSED TO PREACH.

First Meeting of the Ohio Conference — Makes fence rails to buy a horse — Goes to Maysville to meet the Preachers — Exhorts — Rev. W. McMahan's Account of his Interview with young Bascom — Goes to Conference at Chillicothe — Is refused Entertainment, but provided for by Mr. McMahan — Enjoyments and Benefits of the Conference — Boundaries of Conferences, and State of the Work at that date — Continued Preparation for the Ministry — Is Licensed to Preach, Feb. 1813 — Is appointed to labor on Brush Creek Circuit — His Account of the Work on this Circuit.

THE first session of the Ohio conference — the old "*western*," having been that year divided — was approaching, and young Bascom was anxious to attend it. But difficulties stood in the way; his father, in his reduced circumstances, was unable to render Henry any aid in the way of outfit for traveling, and indeed could but poorly spare his personal services from the farm: besides, he thought him too young and deficient in knowledge and experience to undertake preaching, yet he yielded his objections, provided Henry could furnish his own outfit. Henry, though but little over sixteen, was not a boy, to be frightened at shadows. He who had traveled over the Appelachian chain on foot, had earned two or three

dollars a day at boring pump logs—besides 'praying nearly half the time,'—whose eloquence had made the guilty tremble, the good rejoice, and the narrow minded to feel envious, and that too when he was younger than now by a long year and a half, was he to abandon or defer the grand object of laboring on a large scale for the world's regeneration, simply because he had no horse, saddle, saddle-bag and like itinerating accoutrements? Never! Accordingly he went to work with a will. He cared not what the labor was, so it was but honest, and would procure him the means of carrying out his engrossing purpose. Mr. F...., a neighbor, wished a number of fence rails made, and Henry was a candidate for the job.

"But, Henry, you are very young, and this is heavy work — man's work."

"Not very old, sir; but I have a strong arm and a good will."

"Very well, you can but try, and if you succeed so much the better."

The terms were settled—twenty-five cents per hundred—and Henry walks into the fresh unculled forest with ax, wedge, and maul, in all the noble pride of confident self-dependence; and soon the crash of falling oak and ash sent loud reverberant sounds through the deep woods and up the hills, and many a heart of oak was riven by the youthful arm of him whose mental and moral power was

destined to rive the very soul and spirit, and joints and marrow of trembling thousands.

The equipments were of course procured, and young Bascom felt more honest pride in their possession than he possibly could, had they been the gift of a wealthy father to a dependent helpless son.

He did not expect at that conference to join the the traveling connection, but as this was his ultimate design, and as he had never attended a conference nor seen a bishop, he looked to his visit to that meeting with such hopes and solicitudes as can only be felt by a youth of his fervid temperament.

Limestone — now Maysville — was a sort of rendezvous at which preachers from points south and west were expected to meet on their way to the conference. The Sabbath preceding the conference several of the preachers were expected to be in Limestone, and appointments were made for them to preach on Saturday night and Sabbath. On Saturday evening young Bascom rode over to town to attend the meeting, to make the acquaintance of the preachers, and then to journey on with them to the conference.

Whether on account of a failure of the preachers to reach there on Saturday night, or through curiosity to hear the Alleghany boy, I am not informed, but on that night Henry exhorted at the meeting, and astonished the hearers, not less by

his boldness in reproving the delinquencies and improprieties of professors, than by the fluency and force of his discourse.

On Sabbath several preachers were in attendance, and among the number was Rev. Mr. McMahan, between whom and young Bascom a friendship there commenced which lasted, bright and sound in all its links, until severed by death—thirty-eight years from that very month. Mr. McMahan shall report to us of that first interview:—"In September, 1812, I passed through Maysville — from Indiana territory, where I had been laboring—on my way to the conference to be held at Chillicothe, O., in company with Rev. Samuel Parker and Rev. Wm. Patterson—both long since gone to the home of God. On Sabbath morning I preached, and during sermon observed a very fine looking youth in the congregation, who, from the fixed and earnest attention he gave the sermon, appeared to be deeply interested. I inquired of the family in which I was staying who he was, and learned that his name was Henry B. Bascom, a youth of sixteen, a licensed exhorter, very talented and zealous; and that on the preceding night he had delivered an exhortation which was very pointed against fashionable vice, and which gave offence to some of the members.

"From the first moment I saw Bascom, I felt an uncommon interest in him, and all I heard

from those who knew him, but tended to deepen that interest. When I returned to the church in the afternoon we were introduced, and I was greatly pleased with him; and here commenced an acquaintance which lasted thirty-eight years without interruption or the slightest unpleasant feeling, so far as I know or believe."

Of Bascom, at that date, Mr. McMahan says: "He was well grown, of fine appearance, very pious, sprightly and intelligent for a lad of his years and limited opportunities in early life."

The next day Bascom started with the company for conference, full of delightful anticipations of what he was to see and hear, learn and enjoy. On reaching Chillicothe, the preacher in charge assigned the preachers of the company their respective places of lodging during the conference. "But where," said Mr. McMahan, "is my young friend to stay?" "Who is your young friend? is he a preacher?" "He is young brother Bascom," responded McMahan, "and though not quite a preacher, expects soon to be one." "We have no provision made except for the preachers — we have no place for brother Bascom," was the response. Poor Henry! after all his preparations, and traveling seventy or eighty miles to attend the conference, the cup was about to be dashed after reaching his very lips. His heart sank within him, and he was turning away with a tearful

eye and a sorrowful spirit, to retrace his steps in disappointment and loneliness, to the cottage of his father, to brood over the early blighting of his cherished hopes. But McMahan was there; and he felt, by sympathy, all that young Bascom felt. "Who stays with me?" he inquired of the preacher. "No one," was the answer. "Very well, Henry, you come along with me, and I will make provision for you." He did so; he secured him a cordial welcome in the family, shared with him his room and bed, and made him comfortable in circumstances and in feelings. This kindness was not lost on Bascom; for in an intimacy of thirty-five years, I do not remember ever to have heard him mention the name of McMahan without some indication of special regard.

At this conference, Bascom first saw and heard that great good man, Bishop Asbury; and from him learned those liberal, just and conservative opinions on the subject of American slavery, which are understood to have distinguished the views of Bishop Asbury from those of Bishop Coke, and which settled Bascom's principles, on that subject, for life, in opposition to his earlier views and teachings.

His visit to the conference was greatly beneficial to him; it made him acquainted with the preachers, gave him an insight into the manner of conducting conference business, and widened

his whole horizon of observation respecting church matters.

Down to the General Conference of this year, 1812, the vast territory extending from the northern lakes to the gulf of Mexico, and from the "river Ohio and the great river Kanawha" on the east over all the limitless west, was embraced in one conference, bearing the name of the Western conference. For all this immense field there were employed one hundred traveling preachers, and in it there were thirty thousand, seven hundred and forty members, white and colored. But forty-one years have elapsed, and within the same territory there are now not less than thirty annual conferences and parts of conferences, with several thousand preachers, and probably more than half a million of members. Even after the division of the old Western conference into the Ohio, and Tennessee conferences, each had still a most imperial domain. The Ohio conference had the whole of that state, east Indiana, and a considerable part of Kentucky and western Virginia; while Tennessee conference had all the state of Tennessee, most of Kentucky, part of North Carolina, part of Virginia, all of Indiana except its eastern border, all of Illinois, Missouri and the territory west, all of Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana. In short, there are now about three annual conferences for each presiding elder's

district forty years ago. Western Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri, was each a *circuit*. Such was the general state of the work at the time when young Bascom came forward to take part of its labors and sufferings.

The few months immediately succeeding the Chillicothe conference, Bascom appeared to have spent in industrious preparations for the work of the ministry, not only by reading and study, but by exercising his gift in public under an exhorter's license. In February, 1813, a quarterly meeting was held for the circuit within which he resided—called Brush Creek, I think—at which he attended, was examined, and received license to preach. That part of the state of Ohio was then embraced in the Sciota district—which then extended from the Ohio river on the south, to the Indian boundary on the north. The late Rev. James Quinn was presiding elder, and of course Bascom's first license was signed by that excellent minister of Jesus Christ. The quarterly meeting at which Bascom was licensed to preach, was held at or near the village of New Market, Highland county, O.; and it was to him a pleasant circumstance, that his friend McMahan, who labored this year in Kentucky, had traveled near a hundred miles to attend this meeting, and see his young friend safely through this important trial.

What opinion the presiding elder previously had

of Bascom, or whether he even knew that such a youth existed, I have no means of ascertaining; but McMahan was not likely to leave him in doubt of the high opinion he had himself formed of the young man's piety and talents, and accordingly we find Mr. Quinn appointing the new made licentiate to Brush creek circuit, with Rev. R. W. Finley. This circuit lay in the counties of Adams, Highland and Sciota.

A memorandum of Bascom's of that date says, "We had some small revivals of religion on this circuit; but, oh, the infinite trials and temptations that were strewed in my path — I being young in years and younger in experience. However, I believe that God armed me for the conflict, so that to the present time I have weathered the storm. I have generally felt best in the pulpit, or standing behind a table or chair, meekly believing that a dispensation of the gospel was committed to me.

"During my stay on this circuit, there was a universal call on all the militia to turn out and join the north-western army, so that there were very few people to attend meetings, and those who did were generally so full of the great topic of the day, that they had little room for thoughts of heaven and happiness."

CHAPTER IV

ADMISSION INTO THE ITINERANCY, AND FIRST YEAR OF TRAVEL.

Is admitted into the Itinerancy, and appointed to Deer Creek Circuit — Extent of his work — Studious Habits — Great Improvement — Advantages enjoyed about Chillicothe — Extract from his Diary — Reflections on his Habits and Character — Sickness — End of the Year.

In the autumn of 1813, he was received by the Ohio annual conference as a regular probationer in the itinerancy, and was appointed to labor on Deer Creek circuit, with Rev. Alexander Cummings.

This was one of the heaviest circuits in the conference,* and Bascom, of course, had no lack of labor to perform. This, however, he peformed with freedom and zeal, and besides found time for much reading and study. Mr. McMahan, speaking of this early period of his ministry, says: "I never witnessed such rapid and solid improvement in any man as I saw in Bascom." He literally devoured every thing in the nature of books that came in his way, and such was the

* I find a plan of this circuit among his papers, from which it appears that there were twenty-seven regular appointments for preaching, besides numerous extra appointments at night, on rest days, &c.

astonishing retentiveness of his memory, that he seemed to make every valuable thought and expression found in his rapid reading, permanently his own. A remarkable instance of this occurred at the date in question. Chillicothe was embraced in his circuit, and as it was one of the largest towns in the State, as well as its capital, he enjoyed such facilities for procuring books as he had never before enjoyed. Here he met with a new work by a young poet — Bryan — which pleased his undisciplined fancy. I speak of the "Mountain Muse," * a bombastic extravaganza, such as no matured mind would tolerate, save in a *boy* — as the author really was when he wrote it — but young Bascom had not judgment to detect its blemishes, and was rather pleased with its exuberance and high-sounding words. He greedily read it through, and in an incredibly short time had the whole mass of valueless lumber stored away in his memory; and years afterwards he could repeat nearly the whole without balk or falter.

I believe it is almost universally true, that those who possess natural talents for excelling in the higher departments of oratory, are, in early youth, fond of an inflated and overwrought

* So much was young Bascom charmed with this work, that he wrote to the author a letter, in praise of it; and proposing the general circulation of the book in the western country.

style, abounding in superfluous expletives, and "great swelling words," and hence the early performances and productions of those who have subsequently become distinguished for fine impassioned and declamatory eloquence, have usually fallen under the severe censure of staid and sober critics. And so generally has this been the case, that, with many persons, this very faultiness in youth is looked on rather as a promise of final success, than an indication of failure in an attempt to acquire eminence in popular oratory. Regarded in this light, it must be confessed that young Bascom's early style promised unequaled success, for while the young and the unlearned listened with wonder and awe, sedate critics, who apply the standard of the man to measure the stature of the boy, shook their heads ominously, and old men with gray hairs and round coats looked sad, and said, "He would make a fine lawyer, or statesman, but he is not the stuff of which to make a Methodist preacher."

Astonishingly great was the improvement made by Bascom during this year; about the capital he not only had access to books, but to men of cultivated minds and manners. The war with Great Britain had but fairly opened. Chillicothe was an important rendezvous, and here he met at once the wisdom and the chivalry of the State, and Bascom was the youth to make a gain of

all these favoring circumstances. There was indeed a pervading excitement in the spirit and circumstances of the times with which he strongly sympathized, and which aided greatly the rapid development of his powers. Probably no locality in the west could have exerted a greater influence on young Bascom, at that particular time, than Chillicothe and its vicinity. Here resided an ex-governor, a judge of the Supreme Court, and several other prominent citizens, who were Methodist local preachers — here collected the learning, the civil authorities and the military talent of the commonwealth — to this place were brought, in the autumn of this year, the officers and soldiers taken prisoners by Commodore Perry, in the capture of the British fleet on Lake Erie, and from all these sources he was constantly gathering up knowledge.

But we are not to infer, because Mr. Bascom was diligently employed in the ardent pursuit of literature and general knowledge, he was therefore lacking in ministerial zeal, or in the cultivation of personal piety; and as there has been a general mistake on this subject, I think it due to his character, to insert here an extract from a private unpretending journal which he kept while on this circuit, in which he noted his labors and experience from day to day. Its first entry is dated Chillicothe, Thos. Hind's house, Oct. 1813.

"September 7, 1813. I was appointed by the Western [Ohio] conference to Deer creek circuit. Sept. 30, arrived at my circuit. Oct. 1, 2, 3, and 4, I attended a camp meeting in the neighboring circuit, and tried to preach and had a pretty good time. Oct. 6, filled my first appointment on my circuit — felt very low in spirits, the people being dull and dead. Resorted to the woods and prayed, though sorely tempted to believe the Lord had no work for me to do here. Returned to the house and held family prayers — felt my sorrows measurably dissipated, and light and glory began to break into my soul.

"Oct. 7 Rode five miles to my appointment — Nobody out to meeting. Spent the day in reading, writing, prayer, and meditation. I feel calmness of mind, and serenity of soul, but no sensible or powerful manifestation of the love of God.

"Oct. 8, was a rest-day, and a day of peace to my soul. Rode eleven miles to my next appointment, and spent the evening in prayer and meditation, and felt sensible manifestations at the time of the evening sacrifice. Felt the necessity of redeeming time and living near the Lord, and promised to be more faithful in the discharge of duty. Lord, hear thy needy creature's cry, and let his prayer come up unto thee.

"Oct. 9. Tried to preach to about sixty people, and had a precious time. Some praised God, but

others remained without strength. — I meet with some powerful temptations, but grace is my strong fortress. Lord, send forth thy light and thy truth, and let them guide me.

'In fierce temptation's darkest hour
Shield me from sin and Satan's power,
Tear every idol from thy throne,
And reign, my Saviour, reign alone.'

"Read Dow on the rights of man—read a great deal in the New Testament, and studied grammar. O, may I possess the spirit of my station.

"In the evening preached again, on the general resurrection — an awful time — took two into society.

"Oct. 10. Preached the funeral of Henry Carr, of Lexington, Ky., who died on his return from the north western army. Rode five miles in the evening to a prayer meeting, exhorted the people to holiness, and felt very well. Sat up till very late for supper. Went to bed and slept cold and uneasy — rose but little before sunrise, prayed with the family — retired to the woods, where I found the Lord precious. Read the bible, and some of Fletcher's masterly productions — wrote some letters, and so spent the morning before preaching. Help me, Lord, to-day.

"Oct. 11. Tried to preach on the necessity of regeneration, had an uncommon time — the power of the Lord was present, and many trembled before

Him. Met the class, and had a profitable waiting on the Lord. After dinner rode to my next appointment.

"Oct. 12. Rose pretty early, fed my horse, attended to secret prayer, returned to the house and prayed with the family. Felt low in spirits, waited a long time for breakfast — read the experience of Nehemiah Duncan — thought much on the solemn importance of my mission and call to the work of the ministry. About one o'clock an alarm was raised in the neighborhood that a child, just beginning to talk, had wandered away into the woods and was lost. We all turned out and searched the woods until about sunset, when we found the lost child about a mile and a half from its home. This alarm having collected a good many people, advantage was taken of it to make an appointment for preaching that night at a school house. I felt truly well towards the last of the discourse, and I trust good was done.

"Oct. 13. Rose very early — fled to the woods and prayed — fed my horse, prayed with the family — ate my breakfast, and started for my next preaching place. After riding about six miles, met the man at whose house I was to preach, and he informed me there would not be any one at home; so I rode through the neighborhood until I found a place to preach at, and to lodge at. Sent round and called in the neighbors to preaching. These

people appear kind, but *prodigiously filthy*, and filthiness I hate. At twelve o'clock I preached to about fifteen souls, on the danger of neglecting salvation.

"Started for my next appointment, rode till after sunset, but failed to reach the place, having missed my way. I finally found an old cabin or hut, at which I had to tarry for the night, but met with hard fare; I succeeded, however, in getting some green corn for my horse, and a straw bed for myself by paying a high price for them. Rose very early, and as soon as it was light started, and after riding several miles through a very heavy rain, I reached the house I aimed to find the evening before. The family received me very kindly; after praying with them I enjoyed a very hearty breakfast, having eaten nothing for eighteen or twenty hours. Feel calmness of soul, but not so much engaged as I wish to be. Lord, breathe thy Holy Spirit on me. About noon set off for my next appointment — still cold and rainy — reached the place after sunset. Next morning was sorely tempted, wrestled in prayer at my bedside, then went to the woods and prayed until I felt better, returned and prayed in the family; read some in the Bible, my old companion, also a sermon of Rev. Freeborn Garrettson on the union of the graces, an excellent piece of work. At twelve o'clock tried

to preach to about a dozen people, and believe good was done.

"On the 15th October, as I was riding through the barrens, my horse started, stumbled, and came near throwing me off. The thought struck me, how easily might I, but for a kind Providence, have been thrown and killed; in a moment another impression: perhaps that stumble of my horse was intended to save my life, by preventing some lurking Indian or savage white man from shooting me from his hiding place. I quickly looked around and saw, or thought I saw, a man peeping from behind a tree. It may have been imagination, but just then I heard some one whistle in a thicket about a hundred yards distant, as if giving a signal. I was greatly alarmed, every moment expecting some one to shoot at me. Just then I discovered two men creeping out of a thicket, having the appearance and equipments of armed Indians. Whether they were Indians or white men, I never knew, for in my fright I put the whip to my horse, and fled at full speed. The whole appeared to me like a providential preservation."

I have given the foregoing from Mr. Bascom's journal, to give the reader some idea of his manner of life, his trials and mental exercises; but these records are too extended to be transcribed into this work. It may not be uninteresting,

however, to give some occasional sketches from this journal, as being well calculated to show that the life of a traveling preacher at that day was far from being one of ease, and to show that Bascom shunned none of the hardships or toils that came in the way of his work.

A few days after the last named date, he had to make his way to his appointment, a distance of seven miles, through the woods without road or path, guided only by occasional *blazes* on the trees.

On the 24th October we find him at a village where there was no regular preaching, where he met an old preacher desirous to preach, who, he says, "despised government and opposed all denominations, and especially the Methodists." He referred the matter to the people, and they decided that Bascom should preach, which he did.

"Oct. 28. Preached to a large congregation and had a good time. Had my feelings much hurt by some of the old members, who claim to exercise domination over their preachers, and require conformity to all their notions.

"Nov. 1. Spent with my senior preacher and presiding elder — was much wounded by some of the brethren. One of them went so far as to say that unless I quit preaching so *flowery*, I might preach till doomsday in the afternoon, and no one would ever be converted by it; but the Lord knows my heart.

"Nov. 24. Exhorted three or four persons, no more having come out to meeting. When meeting was over I started out to see some of the members, and know why they did not attend church. The first house I visited I found the lady very tender, and much distressed about neglecting public worship, and she confessed, with reluctance and weeping, that the opposition of her husband was the cause. At the next house the lady seemed rather to take my visit in ill part, at first. I told her I had been sent to the circuit to preach, and if the people would not come to meeting I would meet them at their houses. She then cooled down and thanked me for calling; I prayed with the family and left them. Nov. 28. Preached in Chillicothe on the mission of Messiah—met *three* classes.

"Dec. 2. Rode to my appointment and preached to about fifty souls. When I was about half done, the chimney smoked to such degree as to drive us all out of the house. But we took all the fire out, and returned—had a precious time. That night preached again, and had a time of great power.

"Dec. 9. Rode to Washington, Fayette county, but as nobody came to meeting, I passed to my next appointment; in a mile or two came to a creek which was high, ventured in and had to swim it—got myself wet, and my saddle-bags full of water,

so that books and clothes proved no better than myself — emptied the water out of my saddle-bags, and pushed on to my place of destination."

On the 15th he was taken suddenly ill, and narrowly escaped with life.

"Sunday, Dec. 25. Rode to my appointment — had a time long to be remembered. Rode to Chillicothe — quite unwell — got brother T. [Tiffin probably] to preach at the church, while I went to preach to the British prisoners; but they would not permit me to preach, so I was free from them. Met a class: — at three o'clock John Emmet, then a member of the Legislature, preached for me — met two classes: at night Dr. Monnett gave us a fine discourse on a pretty subject."

The following entry occurs on the 31st. "Now, on this evening of the last day of the year 1813, I covenant, that if the Lord will bless me, and establish my ways as a Methodist preacher and minister of Christ, I will be more faithful and live more humble, God being my helper. Amen. Dec. 31, 1813. — H. B. Bascom.

"Jan. 1, 1814. Preached to about fifty souls, the Lord was with us. Got brother G. [Goldsbury] to preach at night — had a precious time. After preaching had a prayer meeting, and the God of Jacob was with us. Jan. 2. Preached twice, and I believe, eternal good was done.

"Jan. 3. Rode six miles, preached and met the

class — felt abundantly refreshed, and encouraged to be more faithful, that the Lord may revive his work in the circuit.

"Jan. 5. Rode seven miles, preached and met class, we felt that our God was intimately nigh! Rode three miles, and preached at night, and had a right precious sermon.

"Jan. 6. Rode eighteen miles and preached. Took dinner and rode three miles to my evening appointment in a little town — the house was crowded. Just as I read my text a young woman took her stand by me, so near as to touch me; I turned and look her sternly in the face, but she was as brazen as Satan himself. I stepped off toward the middle of the room, and she then took another position. I then proceeded with my discourse with liberty and apparent effect. It was the third Methodist sermon ever preached in that place. Took eleven members into society.

"Jan. 7 Had ten miles to ride to my preaching place; on the way got into a quagmire, where my horse sank down midsides deep. With great difficulty, and after a long time, I got him out, but very seriously injured. I managed, however, to reach my appointment, preached, met the class, and the Lord was with us. In the evening rode to the house of my old friend Goldsbury, and spent the night with him very pleasently.

"Jan. 8. Rode to my appointment, and

preached to about thirty souls, on the obligations of religion; met the class, and then rode to brother Smith's, where I had to leave my horse and get another."

On the 15th he attended his quarterly meeting at Old Town, Ross co. O. Many things had been said against Mr. Bascom, and he had come to suspect a great lack of charity in the feelings of his brethren towards him. Under the influence of this suspicion, when it was necessary for the quarterly conference to continue its session on Saturday night, in the upper room of the house, while Bascom had to preach below, he was tempted to think that they were there to listen to him as critics and censors, with the intention of fault-finding. This was uncharitable in him; yet the feeling of friendlessness that possessed his mind had the effect to drive him for help to that friend, who sticketh closer than a brother. He says: — "I went down stairs, ran out of doors, and bowing before God, begged Him to help me — came in, gave out my hymn, and just as I began to pray I felt the Lord very near; the preachers up stairs perceiving this, fell on their knees, and began to pray for me with all their hearts. Before I was half done preaching, the power of the Lord was displayed among us. Some shouted aloud, and the preachers up stairs cried out '*amen*' heartily."

After the quarterly meeting he made a visit to

his parents near the Ohio river. January 22 he arrived at his father's house, and left there on the 26th for his circuit. The manner in which his time was spent during this visit is worthy of notice, and especially by the young preachers of this day.

"Sunday 23, I preached to a large congregation, and met the class of which I was leader before I began to travel. Had a dull time until I was about half through the class, I then fell on my knees and besought the Lord to make bare his arm in our behalf. The power of God was felt by all in the house, three souls were converted, and joined the church." That night he had an appointment in Kentucky. Monday he visited many of his friends, and that night preached again in his father's neighborhood. Tuesday morning he preached, by special invitation, at the house of a Presbyterian gentleman. That night he preached again.

The next morning (26th) he took leave of his friends, and started back to his circuit. That night preached at the house where he tarried. "Next morning rose early, fed my horse, prayed with the family, and rode ten miles to breakfast; while tarrying there read one of Wesley's sermons with edification; then pursuing my journey, put up in the evening at a decent tavern."

The next morning, while waiting for his breakfast at a tavern, a man swore profanely in his

presence; boy as he was, he approached the stranger and mildly, but very solemnly, reproved him. The man apologized and desisted.

It appears that he spent but three whole days among his friends and relatives, and during that time preached five times, met classes, visited, &c. And when on his journey, we find him preaching at night after riding all day, and reading a sermon while waiting for breakfast, so filling up all his time usefully to himself and others.

On the 29th of Jan. he is again on his circuit, preaches twice that day, and twice the next, and once the day following at a new place. First and second Feb. he had two meetings each day, besides long rides. On the 7th he says:—"Rode five miles and preached to *half a dozen* souls—one sinner was deeply convicted, and cried aloud for mercy." On the 18th he had to swim a dangerous stream to reach his appointment, and the weather very cold. The next day had to do the same. "Feb. 20. Met a class at nine o'clock, preached at eleven, met a class at twelve, and another at three in the afternoon." About this time we find him diligently studying Blair and Beatie.

Small congregations did not frighten or discourage him from duty—he says:—"Feb. 23. I found *four* persons, out at meeting—I preached, and truly, the Lord was with us."

On the 27th he says:—"We had an awful

time, three were struck down by the power of God."

"March 3. Rode fourteen miles and preached twice; the Lord was with us graciously both times. That evening a stranger put into my hand a half dollar, for which I was very thankful, as I greatly needed it. Thank God for a special providence."

His description of a family where he tarried on the 9th, is not very flattering. "Tried to study, but too much confusion, tried to pray in the family, but felt too dull — tried to eat breakfast, but the victuals were too dirty for any decent man to eat. The old man is an idiot, the old woman a scold, one son a drunkard, the other a sauce-box, and the daughter a mother without a husband."

"19. Preached, met a large society, rode to town, and met the black class at night. 20. Met class at nine, preached at eleven, met class at twelve, and one at three o'clock."

There are several things to be gathered from these daily notes worthy of notice: no inclemency of weather, or badness of roads, nor ordinary danger prevented him from attending his appointments. He went through rain, snow or hail, over frozen roads and through deep mire, swimming dangerous streams, and surmounting every conquerable obstacle; and then, if he found a large number of hearers, his gratitude to God is almost

always recorded in his journal; but if he found only four or five persons, he invariably preached, and generally with as much zeal and power as if he had had a multitude to hear him. And we have seen that in one instance at least, when he had but *six* hearers he had *one convert.* He spent no time idly. He tells us the time at which he rose every morning, and how he appropriated every hour until his retiring to bed. By thus redeeming time he was enabled to converse enough, write much, pray much, ride a great deal, read and digest an astonishing quantity of matter, generally to preach twice a day, and always under ordinary circumstances to meet all the classes every round. Even in Chillicothe, where there were four classes, he met one on Saturday night, and three on the Sabbath.

Another trait of character is this; — when he has enjoyed a comfortable time in preaching, and had encouraging success, his journal returns thanks to God, and gives him all the glory; and when a barren or discouraging time, he always charges himself with it, and enters into self-examination to find the cause. And his record of nearly every day closes with a short prayer to God for help and strength. I have never seen any other diary, in print or manuscript, that contains so much of severe self-scrutiny, or so much of devout supplication as this of Bascom, written in his eighteenth

year. And perhaps, we can have no surer index to the real character of a man than his secret musings, meditations and mental exercises, committed to a private record, intended for the inspection of no human eye but his own.

In his indefatigable industry, and prayerful trust in God, we have the true secret of that wonderful power that raised an ignorant and obscure boy to be an honor to the church, and a wonder to the world.

From April to June 16, we find no entry in his journal, but he informs us that it was because he was most of the time sick. Indeed, at that period, the Sciota valley was an exceedingly sickly region, and near the end of this year, Bascom says, that he had suffered more sickness during his stay on that circuit, than in his whole life before. Yet he says, "While I have been sick the Lord has been with me, and I sensibly feel myself blessed with an increase of humility and grace."

About this time he records the beginning of what he calls a "great affliction of mind," from which he prays to be delivered, but which harrased him to the very end of life — *debt.* "A number of causes led to this grand misfortune," says he, "as bad economy, loss on books sold on the circuit, poverty and consequent want of clothing when I came on the circuit, helping my father to

some money, &c. But how am I to extricate myself? I am allowed only eighty dollars a year, and have received but seventy of that. God only knows what is to become of me." In August, he visited Circleville, Pickaway Co., to preach, and was there seized with a dangerous bilious attack at the house of Ralph Osborn, Esq., of whose kindness and that of his lady, Bascom speaks in the most grateful terms. From that time until conference, his health was very bad. He frequently preached, but those efforts again prostrated him. His meditations during this period are most searching and spiritual. He prays that God may restore him and direct his appointment to a healthy circuit the next year.

His last entry in his diary was made September 20, 1814. "September 19. I enjoyed myself better than usual in soul and body. 20. I arose the first one in the house; went to the woods and prayed. Through the day I read my Bible and Whitfield's sermons. He has a short ingenious method of treating a text. Mark that on the burning bush."

From the manner in which Mr. Bascom speaks in his diary of his colleague —Rev. A. Cummings, and from the tone of Mr. Cummings' letters to him, I infer that the latter had the warmest friendship for, and the utmost confidence in his young friend Bascom. One of these letters dated two years

after they had left the Deer Creek Circuit, closes thus, "I have only time to write and let you know that I have not forgotten you, and the good times we have had together, as well as what we suffered together. Pray for me my dear brother. Yours in love, A. Cummings."

CHAPTER V

SECOND YEAR — TRAVEL IN THE MOUNTAINS.

Improvement during the Year — Faithful Service — Popular with the Public, but the Reverse with Old Members — Cause of the latter — Cold reception at Conference — Objections to, and Predictions concerning him — Character Passed — Appointed to Guyandotte Circuit in Western Virginia — Goes to his Work — Nature and Extent of it — Hair breadth Escape from a Panther — Gets lost — A Night in the Mountain — Illness — Perilous Adventure with a Bear — Chased by Wolves — Misunderstanding and Reconciliation, showing Bascom's true Character.

By the close of this conference year, Bascom had not only greatly extended his range of knowledge both of books and men, but by contact with the more intelligent of society, he had been enabled to cast off the bashfulness of the inexperienced boy, and take on the appearance and polish of cultivated manhood. He had risen rapidly,

and already had become very popular with a large and influential portion of society. Of all this he could not be unconscious, and as he had labored most dilligently throughout the year, in the work assigned him — performed long rides, endured severe hardships, preached much, and attended to all the details of pastoral service — he fondly hoped the conference would rejoice in his prosperity, and cheer him on with an encouraging "well done, good and faithful servant;" but most of the very causes which tended to give him popularity with the great world, wrought in the minds of many of his plain, pious, old fashioned brethren of the conference a result entirely different.

What were those causes? His personal appearance was exceedingly attractive — his form was in all respects one of the most perfect that nature ever moulded, and in his features was as much of manly beauty as can consist with the highest expression of mental power; his movements were rather elastic and graceful, than staid and preacher-like; his apparel was neat, and in fashion differed little from the style of that worn by secular gentlemen of respectability; and then, as has been remarked, his style was highly ornate. He was, to be sure, very zealous in his appeals, pointed in rebuking sin, and almost harsh in denouncing the terrors of the law against the

impenitent and incorrigible; yet the thunderings of Sinai, as they came from his fluent tongue, sounded eloquently even in the ears of those against whom they were hurled, and while they trembled beneath the power of his terrible words, they but admired and loved him the more for the fervor and forcefulness of his appeals.

Such a man — a youth of eighteen summers, of elegant person, apparel and address, after whom the learned, and wealthy, and fashionable were running, and with whom he was becoming an idol, was not the man to get on without some difficulties among the Methodists and Methodist preachers of pike-staff plainness of that day, and on the still sparsely settled frontier. Accordingly on going to conference, though he had made some fast friends, he yet met coldness in many from whom he looked for cordiality and encouragement. This he felt acutely, for his sensibility was exquisite.

As he had served in the regular work but one year, the only question in his case was as to his continuance on trial for another year, yet there were objections even to this. What objections were urged against him in conference I do not know with certainty, but in and out of doors, there were many. It was said, "He gets his sermons from books, and memorizes them;" but when they could not be found in books, it was concluded

that his discourses were written out at length and committed to memory. This, however, was as total a mistake as the other: he did neither. But worse still, it was said, "he is proud"—"a clerical fop"—"ambitious and aspiring," and the larger part seemed to take it for granted that he would not remain long a Methodist preacher, that he would turn lawyer, or "take the gown"— that he had not principle and firmness to withstand the caresses of the great, and the tide of popularity flowing in upon him from the world, and that the matter had better be put to the test at once. And so it was. That region of western Virginia lying along and between the Guyandotte and Great Kenhawa rivers, and then belonging to Muskingum District, was embraced in one circuit called Guyandotte. It was a wild, rough country, not inaptly symbolizing the general character of its population at that time. This circuit was frequently styled the "Botany Bay" of the conference, to which the refractory or unpromising were sent to "break them in," or "drive them off," if incurable. To this circuit Bascom was sent, and without assistant or colleague; and many were the predictions that his proud spirit would not submit.* Not a few expected, and even his

* Bascom, it appears, did not attend the conference, owing probably to his still very feeble state of health; and when conference was ended, no one took the trouble to inform him what disposition was

friends feared, that he would refuse to go, and would withdraw from the church, or at least from the conference. Little did they know of what stuff he was made. No doubt he was one of the last men in that conference — if indeed not the very last — who could have been driven to such a step. He took leave of his friends, mounted his horse, and was, in due time, on his way to the mountains and valleys of Guyandotte and Kenhawa. Here he found long rides, rough roads, difficult streams, hard labor, coarse fare and lean compensation; yet nothing daunted, he pressed through all difficulties, and performed with fidelity the arduous labors assigned him.

On this circuit Bascom's labors were so abundant that his time for reading and study, as well as his general opportunities for improvement were

made of his case, or where he was to labor the ensuing year. In this state of suspense he requested a rustie to make inquiry of one of the preachers for the desired information; and his painful suspense was terminated by the reeeipt of a letter from his unpolished friend, the literature of whieh seemed in admirable keeping with the intelligenee it eonveyed. It is a literary euriosity, and as such is here inserted:

"SEPTEMBER 29, 1814.

Agreeabel to your request I have Inquird for your opintment Br quinn Informs Me that you are opinted to Giondot Cureit and in order for you to find it you must Go down howken (Hoekhocking) to Athens and then inquire the rode for galepeleee (Gallipolis) and you will there find your Curket."

Now "galepelece" was not in his "curket" at all, nor even in the same State with it, yet with this card of direetions Baseom had to start in quest of his field of labor, and find his "curket" as best he could.

very limited; yet such a man as he, will always make opportunities for improvement when possible. In winter this was difficult, as in many of the families where he tarried — probably in most of them — there was but one room for all uses, and for all persons, and therefore the chances for quiet study within doors were small, but when genial spring and warmer summer gave to the lover of nature and of study the free range of the forest, he had a wide woodland chamber for study, which he preferred to all others. He was indeed an enthusiastic votary of nature, and dearly loved her wild and woody haunts. When he had done the traveling, preaching, and class-leading, for the day, it was his custom to take a book and wander into the woods, where he not unfrequently remained until the fall of dusky twilight, or the hooting of the mountain owl admonished him that it was time to return.

On one of these occasions, having finished the regular work of the day, and partaken of his frugal repast with the hospitable family where he sojourned, he took his book — Beatie on Truth — and sought the woods. Soon he entered a sweet wild valley, that nestled down between two lofty mountains, which rose on either side, as if to guard his sacred retreat; he followed up the lovely dell until his eye rested on a large spreading thorn-tree, which, in addition to its own dense foliage, was all

interwoven and mantled over with the thousand tendrils, and broad leaves of a luxuriant grape vine, presenting a shade of inviting coolness, and a swarded carpet of refreshing green. Thither he went, and delighted, cast himself upon this cool lap of nature, to enjoy undisturbed its delicious luxury.

But scarcely had he opened the volume in his hand when a sense of inquietude came over him, and he could not compose his mind to read. In vain he attempted to reason himself into composure; in vain he assured himself that a more charming spot could not be found in the wide forest than that he then occupied; his restlessness but increased until it rose to nervous excitement, and self-reproachingly, he rose up and walked from the spot. Just as he did so, the friend with whom he tarried, starting on a gunning expedition, approached him, and they met a few paces from the tree. At this conjuncture the practiced eye of the hunter discovered what Bascom's had failed to detect—in a moment his piece was leveled, the sharp crack of the rifle rang up the valley, and as its echo came back from the adjacent hills, a huge ferocious panther dropped from its concealment among the vine covered boughs of the thorn-tree, and fell dead on the very spot from which Bascom had but a moment before arisen, under the promptness of that strange restlessness. Shuddering at the hair-breadth escape he had passed, and overwhelmed

with a sense of gratitude to God, he humbly acknowledged that it was the Lord's doing, and marvellous in his eyes! And, not long before his death, he expressed to the writer a most firm conviction that the mysterious and apparently causeless inquietude which drove him from beneath the tree, perhaps at the moment when the ferocious beast was about to pounce upon him, was the work of a special providence of God.

One of his regular appointments was on Elk river, about eight miles above Charleston, and his next preaching place was at the mouth of Linn's creek; to cross the mountain, the distance was short, but to go around by Charleston it was about twenty miles. On one occasion he determined to pass over by the short route, and so save time and travel. There was only a "blind trace" to guide him. But as this was very dim at last, and now covered with fallen leaves, he soon lost it entirely. He then hoped, by keeping on the proper course, to reach his place of destination, without a path; but after traveling many hours he found no trace to follow, and no sign of human habitation. Night approached, and still he saw no way of escape. Hoping that he might be heard by some dweller in the mountain, or by some wandering hunter, he shouted with all his might, and then listened for an answer; but the deep echo of his own voice, coming back from the caves and crags, was the only

response. The shades of evening were setting down on the mountain, yet no relief appeared, and Mr. Bascom began to cast about for some way of passing the night in safety in those dreary solitudes. At length he discovered a fallen tree, in which was a hollow large enough to admit him: here he securely tied his horse, and thrusting his body into the hollow, drew his saddle in after him to close the entrance for protection against cold, and the wild beasts. Commending himself to the protection of Heaven, he passed the night in the best way he could, surrounded by the howling of wolves and wintry winds. The morning found him chilled from the cold, weak from hunger, and but little refreshed by his romantic night's rest; but it was no time for inaction; so he adopted his plan of operation, and then promptly set about its execution. That plan was, instead of wandering about at random as on the preceding day, to descend wherever he could, and taking the first stream he could find, follow it to its confluence with a larger, and so on until he should be conducted either to the Elk or Kanawha river. This he did, and about sunset reached the Kanawha at the mouth of Witche's creek, and soon after, the hospitable abode of Mr. Linn Morris, where he was cordially welcomed and entertained.

Hunger, cold, fatigue and excitement brought on an attack of fever, with which he was confined

for several weeks; but most kindly nursed by the hospitable family of Mr. Morris.

Wild beasts were not rare in that region at the date of our narative; they supplied every table, in a greater or less degree, with meat, and every man was a hunter — occasionally, if not professionally; and if the minister of that day did not have to 'fight with beasts at Ephesus,' he at least stood a good chance to encounter them in some form on Guyandotte. And while in this line, I will relate another adventure of Mr. Bascom when on this circuit, in which a wild beast was a party. I am not sure of the strict correctness of my recollection as to all the details, but can vouch for the substance.

Far back from the river in a sequestered dell under the mountain spurs, Bascom had a regular preaching-place. The inhabitants were not huddled together in dense settlements, but scattered at wide intervals among the fastnesses and valleys of the mountains. When preaching-day arrived, the mountaineers might be seen gathering in from different localities at distances varying from two to ten miles, and by modes of conveyance sufficiently unique to excite the attention of the uninitiated. Here might be seen approaching the rustic place of worship, a man on horseback, carrying his wife behind him on the same horse; there you might see a female, dressed in neat homespun, mounted

on an indifferent horse, around the neck of which hung a bell, the clatter of which was temporarily hushed by the wisp of leaves — behind her rides a child, while she carries another on her lap — her husband, in a blue hunting-shirt, with pouch and gun, leads the way down the steep winding path, two or three larger children, with sun-bleached hair and sun-browned faces, following behind as a rear guard: a group of five or ten, comprehending the meeting-goers from one glen, or gorge, might be seen approaching on foot, in Indian file, through the mountain passes, to the rustic temple; and though a stranger, would judge that half a score of souls could not be mustered at one place, and especially on a call of religious duty, when the appointed time arrived, they came pouring in from their invisible habitations, like the clansmen of some Highland chief at the well known signal for a grand rally. And he who expected to find these people barbarously ignorant of the value of truth and the benefits of preaching, would find his mistake. These mountain Christians were people of one book, and however little they knew of Grecian and Roman classics, few people were better acquainted with the doctrines of the Bible, and few better prepared to detect errors in the great elements of theology than they. If a preacher advanced anything novel, even hypothetically, it was well to be prepared for defending it, for he was sure

to be called on for such defence, by the first old lady in whose company he happened to fall.

But I was about to report an incident. On one of Bascom's periodical visits to this place, the preacher had arrived, most of the congregation had assembled, and many were exchanging salutations about the door, others were still dropping in, and the preacher with his saddle-bags on his arm, was conversing with a brother from another neighborhood about making an appointment at a new place, when the report of a gun was heard but a short distance from the place. This was too common an occurrence to excite much interest, until a shout, and then the yelp of a dog were heard in the direction from which the report proceeded, and the next minute a bear was seen running by the place of meeting, pursued by a dog. Instantly two or three rifles were discharged after him, but he was too distant for the balls to take effect. Two or three other dogs joined in the pursuit, and directly nearly every male on the ground followed in the chase. The preacher seeing his congregation gone, dropped his whip and saddle-bags where he stood, and, being exceedingly swift on foot, he was soon ahead of all his people, and but little in rear of the dogs. The woods were dense, and in a very short time, bear, dogs, and preacher were out of sight of the following crowd. The latter pursued by the cry

of the dogs and drippings of blood of the wounded bear, but every moment the sound became more faint and distant, and old bear hunters began to fear that the fleetness of the preacher might bring him into serious peril, should the bear make a stand against his pursuers, while at such a distance in advance of the company as to put him beyond the reach of immediate help. This fear came near to being realized; for the bear, unable to climb, by reason of the wound in his *arm*, and alike unable to elude his enemies by flight, planted himself against a tree and prepared to defend himself to the utmost. The dogs were instantly around him, and at once a furious fight began. Practiced dogs will not close with a bear but by compulsion, or when they have a very decided advantage, but while some make a feint in front, the others snap him in the rear, and then fly off before he can turn on them, and so on alternating the attack as he changes front; but of the three dogs engaged in this conflict, one only had learned the necessity of these cautionary movements. When Bascom came up with the combatants — which was in a very few moments — the trained dog was playing around for an opportunity of a rear cut to his enemy, while the others were fiercely baying him in front, apparently debating the expediency of rushing upon his gnashing teeth and threatening claws. Bascom

saw the posture of the parties, and, cutting a stout bludgeon, instantly but rashly decided on *intervention*, if necessary. Advancing nearer, he encouraged the hesitating dogs to the onset, and they rushed on the foe; the third dog saw his opportunity, to attack from behind, and for a few moments the fight was furious; but soon the bear gave one of the dogs such a blow as sent him away howling with pain, and deeply gashed, another he seized in his terrible embrace, and appeared as if he would crush every bone in his body in a moment. By this time Bascom had got within a few feet of the enemy, and raised his club to bring it down on the head of the foe with crushing energy. The bear had taken a sort of sitting half-erect posture, with his back against the tree, and as the club descended he managed to evade the force of the blow, and catching the bludgeon in his mouth, he struck his fangs through it, and held it fast, still holding the dog in his agonizing hug. Unwilling to be thus foiled, Bascom, having drawn his knife to cut and trim his club, and having no time to return it to his pocket, still held it in his hand, now struck it into the bear's side; it was, however, too small to produce instant death, but greatly exasperated the wounded animal. Either probably regarding this as foul play, or thinking the preacher an enemy more worthy than the dogs, to engage his

powers—I am glad to say he did not live to tell which — bruin dropped the dog from his embrace, and made a plunge at his new enemy. A few seconds before this, the hunter, whose rifle had wounded the bear, having outrun his fellows, emerged from the thicket a few rods from the scene of action. At a glance, he saw Bascom's danger — cast down his gun, as he flew towards the spot with the speed that terror imparts, and drew from its sheath his long hunting knife. As the bear made a plunge that must have brought the preacher fully within his power, two of the dogs seized him behind, and broke the force of the movement, but yet he caught the leg of Bascom's pantaloons in his teeth, and in spite of the efforts of the faithful dogs, would have drawn him within the grasp of his killing embrace, but that at this perilous conjuncture, the hunter plunged his long keen blade to the very hilt into the heart of the furious beast, and with a groan he sank down dead, still holding the preacher's pantaloons between his clenched teeth.

The rest of the company came up — the adventure was talked over — comments were pleasantly made on the preacher's fleetness and courage — the bear was dragged back to the meeting-place, skinned and hung up — the congregation collected in the house, the new-made young bear fighter preached with uncommon life.

an uncommonly interesting class-meeting followed, and a large proportion of the company dined together that day on the "preacher's bear."

I have yet another incident of the same class to relate, the scene of which is laid in this same circuit. It is furnished me by Professor M..... who was a student at Augusta College, where it was related by Bascom to his class. "He was," says Prof. M., "in the habit of frequently amusing and delighting the class during the unexpired hour after recitation, by detailing incidents and adventures which occurred in the early part of his career as an itinerant preacher; among the rest he relates the following:

"During one of the years of my early ministerial career, I was sent to one of the mountainous circuits of western Virginia. The face of the country generally was exceedingly rugged and precipitous — so much so, that frequently for miles, in going from one appointment to another, there was no road except a narrow bridle-path. It so happened on one occasion, while winding along one of these mountain pathways, on a dark and dreary afternoon in mid-winter, that, before I was aware of the lateness of the hour, night was upon me. I had but an imperfect knowledge of the localities of the country, and consequently entertained some doubt as to whether I should be able to reach any house, where I might lodge for

the night. While I was reflecting upon my very unpleasant condition, suddenly the startling howl of wolves, in the distance, reached my ear. In a few moments the sound was nearer and more distinct. I was at once convinced, that they were on my track, and my only hope of safety and of life, was in my horse. I accordingly quickened speed, and hurried on as rapidly as the nature of the blind and rugged path would allow. Nearer and louder, and more appalling were the howls of my hungry pursuers, until I began to be painfully suspicious that I was the doomed victim of their savage ferocity. Yet I hurried on, while the wolves were approaching, nearer and still nearer. At length my hat was knocked off by a limb, and was torn to atoms in an instant by the wolves. They were now so near me, that, notwithstanding the darkness, I could see them quite distinctly. In this moment of extremity, I discovered a light just before me, and hastening on towards it, I dismounted and leaped over the fence, just as the wolves had come up within a few feet of my horse. Disappointed of their prey, they returned to the woods, and I passed the night in the hospitable cabin of the rude mountaineer. Many years after this incident I preached in Charleston, Va.—when I descended from the pulpit, a grey headed man approached me, and, offering his hand, said, 'Do you remember

me, Mr. Bascom?' I replied that I did not. 'Then,' said he, 'do you recollect the night you were chased by the wolves?' I replied, 'I do remember it well.' 'I am the man,' said the other, 'at whose cabin you stayed during the night of your adventure with the wolves.'"

I have given you the incident as nearly in the professor's own language as I can recollect.

While on this circuit, a misunderstanding occurred between Mr. Bascom and a chief official member of his charge, and they appear to have separated in this state of feeling. Some time after he left the circuit, he received a letter of humble acknowledgment from this brother. He says: "You cannot tell what I have suffered. When I thought of the many good sermons you preached to us, and that eloquent one at Guyandotte, and at H.'s and at F.'s, O, how I have felt. Great God, pity and forgive me! Dear brother, pray for me; and for Christ's sake, do forgive me, for I know I love you." From this man's letter we learn that himself was the chief offender, and yet he informs us that Bascom — the injured party — was first to seek a reconciliation. "When I received your letter, sorrow filled my whole soul." Here is an example of forgiving goodness.

CHAPTER VI.

THIRD YEAR — AND LAST YEAR IN OHIO.

Close of the Year — Account of his Labors and Compensation — His Resolution to go on in his work — Inducements to Desist — Goes to Conference — Refused Admission into Full Connection — His feelings on the occasion — Encouraged by his Old Friend — Is granted a Third Year of Probation, and agrees to take work — Appointed to Mad River Circuit — Death of his Mother — Character of his Circuit — First Acquaintance of the Writer with him — First Sermon heard — Preachers at Camp Meeting — The Writer Awakened — Thrilling Adventure with the Indians — Illness and Dangerous Experiment — Pecuniary Embarrassments.

THIS was Mr. Bascom's second year in the regular itinerant work, and, at its close, he was legally eligible to admission into full connection in the conference, and to deacon's orders. Of his perils and sufferings, we have seen something; of the extent of his labors during this year, as well as his pecuniary compensation, we will hear his own report, made at the end of his term of service, in a letter to P Scales, Esq., dated "Cabell county, Va., August 25, 1815." By a change in the time of the meeting of conference, the year appears to have been shortened to nine or ten months. He says: "I expect on to-morrow and next day, to complete my labors on this circuit, and in this part of the world. Since November, 1814, I have traveled *three thousand miles*, and preached to *four*

hundred congregations, and from the public, with the exception of a few private gifts, I have received *twelve dollars and ten cents*." Think of a gifted young man preaching eloquent sermons at the rate of three cents each, and then seven or eight miles of rough travel thrown in with each sermon! Was he not disheartened under those circumstances, and tempted to accept offers of lucrative situations, which were open to him? His own noble response to this inquiry is worthy the man, and worthy the holy cause in which he was engaged. Hear it: — "'But none of these things move me.' I possess a settled consciousness that I did not engage in the ministry to accumulate wealth; and when I meet with trials and disparagements, I am not at all disappointed, but meet with firmness what I had anticipated — not with fear. I can get, as soon as I please, $500 per annum for my services. But no, I'll travel, and try to possess the spirit of goodness and universal benevolence." So far was he from regarding this toilsome and uncompensated work, as unworthy his already popular talents, he rather mourns his want of qualification for the honorable vocation of a gospel missionary. "My mortification is great," he adds, "under the consideration of my incapacity to serve the public as I I ought, in order to attract attention, and excel in preaching. But while I feel animating fires in my veins, I'll preach His gospel who gave me power

to preach." To appreciate these noble sentiments, it must be kept in mind that they were uttered by a popular and attractive young man, of nineteen summers, at the period of closing his labors, privations, and perils, in his mountain field, in which he had preached four hundred sermons, and traveled three thousand miles on horseback within three hundred days; for all of which he had received twelve dollars and ten cents, while tempting offers of lucrative employment were made him, on condition of his exchanging a *sacred* for a *secular* vocation.

But another consideration must not be overlooked in making this estimate; a year earlier than this, as we have seen, he was involved in debt, and partly by contributing to aid his destitute father; those debts still hung over him, and must now be increased by the procurement of conveniences not to be had for his *twelve dollars;* and that father was still destitute, and oh, how the son's heart yearned to administer relief. By abandoning the laborious work of the itinerant ministry, he could honorably pay his debts, and aid his father; but no, there burned a "fire in his veins," that would not allow him to consult with flesh and blood.

His work for the year being completed, he went, with a good conscience and a cheerful heart, to meet his brethren in conference, and to convince them, by the evidence of his abundant and faithful

labors, that he was worthy their confidence and friendship, and to "take part of the ministry" with them. But how imperfectly were his virtues and real worth known, even by his ministerial brethren. He had labored faithfully; no neglect of duty, no crime or heresy was charged against him; yet, in the opinion of some of the seniors of the conference, his dress, his gait, his general unmethodist-preacher-like appearance afforded strong indications that he would never make an humble itinerant preacher. The influence of this class carried with them enough of the younger members of the body to make up a majority, and the result was, that when the vote was taken on admitting Bascom into full connection, a majority was opposed to him, and he was rejected. This official expression of distrust, coming as it did, immediately in the wake of his severe labors and privations in the mountains, deeply wounded his spirit. He had labored on the roughest work they could assign, at the rate of *three cents* a sermon, but his brethren had now decided that he was not worthy longer to enjoy such a privilege. On the announcement of this decision, he arose and walked from the room with the calmness of despair, to collect his thoughts and settle his purposes for the future. Perhaps, if Heaven had not provided a kind friend to soothe and support him in this extremity, he might have sunk beneath the burden, and felt authorized to

abandon a work in which his brethren were unwilling that he should take part; but before the tempter had time to sow seeds of disaffection, or rash resolve, in his bleeding heart, he found himself in the arms of his faithful friend McMahan, who had followed him out to administer comfort and fortify his resolution of steadfastness. If he was sensitive to wrongs and injuries, he was quickly alive to the solace of sympathy, and would readily yield his own preference or opinions to the counsels of faithful friendship; accordingly, "he soon consented to hear his unjust punishment without a murmur;" and the conference agreeing to give him another year of trial, he was appointed to labor as junior preacher on Mad river circuit, with Rev. Moses Crume as his senior minister, and Rev. John Sale his presiding elder.

This appointment, the reader will recollect, was made in the autumn of 1815, and at that date *three* circuits covered the whole distance from the Ohio river on the south, into the Indian territory on the north; these were *Cincinnati circuit*—for there was then no *station*—*Union circuit*, embracing Dayton, Lebanon, Xenia, &c., and *Mad river circuit*, extending from the frontier settlements, west of the Great Miami, eastward on to the Scioto, and northward into the Indian country. Troy, Piqua, Springfield, Urbana, and several Indian towns were embraced in this circuit.

In September of this year, Mr. Bascom was called to suffer the most severe calamity he had ever endured, in the death of his excellent and much beloved mother.

Henry was evidently a great favorite with his mother, and most tenderly did he love her. After she had been dead more than thirty years, he would frequently weep when speaking of her. It appeared to afford him pleasure to the end of his life, that in her closing scene, turning from all others, she bade him kneel at her bed-side, and died with her hands clasped in his.

She was a woman of high order of intellect, and most benevolent and affectionate heart.

The following from his pen, apparently designed as an epitaph, is dated May, 1819:

"Mrs. Hannah Bascom, who died in peace, September, 1815, in the forty-second year of her age —

Was *romantic* and *gay* when *young*,
Joined with *gentleness*, *industry* and affection;
When more advanced, was *frugal*, *thoughtful*, and *grave*,
In union with *sensibility*, *truth*, and *complacency*.
At mature age she became *pious* and *prayerful*.
Possessed of the religion of Christ in her premature decline,
Heaven benignly smiled and gave her *fortitude*,
In affliction, uprightness and integrity supported her;
In death the hope of Heaven cheered,
And the Christian braved his terrors without fear."

This circuit, though a frontier one, was in a rich and delightful country, a large proportion of the population of which, were intelligent and in a

good degree refined, and among them a large number of located ministers of high standing. Here again, Bascom got into a country of *books*, and society from which he could learn much by personal intercourse, — and no such advantage, when thrown in his way, was neglected by him. It was indeed a much better field, both for the employment of his talents, and for their improvement, than that occupied by him the preceding year. Here his eloquence soon attracted attention, and drew crowds to hear him; indeed, no man, young or old, had commanded such congregations in that district of country.

On this circuit it was that the writer of this biographical sketch, first saw the young orator. I well remember the first time I heard him preach. It was in the old frame church in Springfield, soon after his arrival on his work. The house was filled to overflowing, and many persons stood on the outside during the sermon — for already his fame as an orator had sounded abroad. It is but candid to confess, that at this time, I felt much more interest in his eloquence, than in the important truths he delivered to the multitude, yet, his oratory alone so captivated my mind and feelings, that I stood outside of a window during the entire services, without the slightest sense of weariness, and for the first time in life, regretted the ending of the sermon. I recollect that there

stood by my side a gentleman, who was not a church-goer, and whom I had never before seen at a place of worship: after listening to the sermon with attention and evident interest, he addressed me at the close, in nearly the following language: "That is the sort of preaching to do good: if all preaching were like that, every body would go to church." And yet it was a searching sermon, abounding in truths and denunciations the most solemn and terrible.

In June, 1816, Mr. Bascom and his colleague, assisted by several other ministers, held a camp-meeting within the present limits of the town of Mechanicsburg, in Champaign county, Ohio. On Sabbath morning of that meeting, Mr. Bascom delivered a sermon powerfully eloquent and effective, which, under the blessing of God, became the starting point in the reformation and religious life of his biographer. This circumstance, no doubt, had much influence in superinducing a friendship of peculiar intimacy, which knew no interruption until death severed the bond.

Though this circuit was free from many of the perils and privations of Mr. Bascom's preceding one, it had a large frontier, and would *now* be regarded as a field of great difficulty, danger, and toil. One adventure of a somewhat perilous character, I shall relate. Bascom had been visiting the societies west of the Great Miami, and

extended his tour to the old Indian village of Wapakanetta. Indians were numerous in the country, — the war with Great Britain had but just ended, and there were still Indians who cherished a secret hostility to the whites, and were glad of an occasion or opportunity to follow the promptings of their unforgiving hearts.

After preaching, he left his horse at the fort and walked a mile or two to spend the night with a Mr. McNish, who had but recently built a house, intended to be proof against the attacks of Indians. It was constructed of stout beach logs fitted well together, the floor was made of heavy logs split in half — called puncheons — and the ceiling overhead was formed of solid timbers instead of planks or plastering. A large quantity of wood, green and dry, was collected in the house, and at bed time a heavy log was placed firmly against the door. There had not been any recent Indian disturbances, and no present danger was apprehended; but Mr. McNish was too prudent a borderer to be caught off his guard, and accordingly made his preparations every night, as if expecting an attack. It was well he did so; for about midnight a considerable body of Indians made a furious assault on the house; but in a moment all within were fully ready for them. They attempted to force the door, but in vain; for it was made of heavy puncheons, and immovably

fastened. Foiled in this, they attempted to fire the house; but green beach logs they found to be less combustible material than they wished, and here, also, they failed. They next essayed to descend the chimney, but a quantity of dry wood thrown upon the still large fire, sent up such a volume of heat as drove the assailants back precipitately.

Before the morning, the Indians had retired; but only, as was supposed, to lurking-places, from which they might pounce, tiger-like, on the unwary or unsuspecting.

But what was Bascom to do? his way lay through the thick woods, and those woods were believed to be infested with hostile savages. He resolved, however, to brave the danger, and attempt to reach his next point, at a settlement on Mad river, ten miles south of Springfield. He accordingly set out on his perilous journey alone, but had not proceeded very far, until an Indian woman came out of the woods to the side of his path, and by significant gestures gave him to understand, that his life was in peril, and the necessity of prompt action to escape the threatening danger. Profiting by the hint, he gave rein to his horse, and, in the shortest time possible, reached the fording-place of the Great Miami. But now a new difficulty was presented; the river was not only full, but covered with floating ice

which seemed to render a crossing impossible. Hesitating a moment to encounter the danger before him, he cast a look behind, and saw the Indians at a distance advancing at their best speed upon him, already exulting in the certainty of their prey. Instantly he plunged into the bold ice-mantled stream, and nobly did his beast buffet the rushing current, and bear his master to the other shore, at which he arrived in safety just as the Indians approached the ford. They did not dare to tempt the dangerous river, trusting to the strength of their light ponies, and had to content themselves with uttering a savage yell and brandishing their glittering tomahawks in the air.

The preacher had escaped the savages, but he found his limbs mailed in ice, and himself in danger of being frozen before he could reach a lodging-place; for it was a snowy March day, and he had to travel from the Miami, near Piqua, perhaps, to the Mad river valley, a distance of, it may be, twenty miles.

When out of reach of the Indians, he dismounted, emptied the water out of his boots and saddle-bags, wrung out his stockings, and while he permitted his faithful horse to eat a few ears of corn with which he was provided, he employed himself in eating a lunch of bread and dried venison, exercising the while actively, to give his blood lively circulation, that he might the better endure the

cold. This done, he remounted and addressed himself to his journey.

The first marriage I had witnessed in the west, took place about a year previous to the date of this event, between members of two excellent old Virginia families; and the young couple settled near Mad river, and their house became a home for the preachers, and a regular place of preaching.

Thither Bascom was bound, and there his horse carried him without loss of time. At his pleasant quarters he was soon made warm, dry and comfortable, and retired early to bed for a good night's rest after the fatigues and excitements of the day. But it so happened that the good lady was that night brought to her accouchment, and the weary preacher was aroused from his first sweet slumber to procure assistance for the occasion, and to seek other lodgings for the remainder of the night. Twenty years afterward, Bascom preached within the bounds of his old circuit, in what is now no mean city. After service he was introduced to a genteel young married lady, by a name with which he was not familiar, and was quite taken aback, when she pleasantly stated that she had long desired an opportunity to apologize for causing him the loss of a night's rest when he much needed it, and to thank him for important services rendered. He was still entirely in the dark, until she informed him that she was the daughter of

Mr. L..., at whose house he put up on the evening of his escape from the Indians, and that that was the night of her birth.

It was on this circuit that an incident occurred that may be thought worth recording. He was seized with a fever of that severe and obstinate type, which was so very common in the flats and prairies of that district of country, in its first settlement. It was a frontier locality, and some time elapsed before a physician was called to attend to the case. When he came he expressed strong doubts as to Bascom's recovery, but employed the usual prescriptions for subduing the disease. After a few visits, he expressed the opinion that the case was hopeless, or at least that there was very little hope of the patient's recovery, and that as he could do him no good, it would be advisable to discontinue his visits, which he accordingly did. Still the prescribed medicine was continued, and still the fever raged on; and though the patient was burning like a furnace with thirst, according to the *regime* of the times, the use of cold water was strictly prohibited, under pain of supposed instant death. Bascom believed his end was at hand, and was resigned to meet his fate; but oh, if he could but have one good, free draught of water, he thought he could die with more comfort and perfect resignation. At the base of a shady, greenswarded hill,

a few rods from the house where he lay, a cold spring bubbled up from the earth, and sent its crystal waters murmuring down the vale. Access to this spring was the sufferer's supreme earthly desire; and even when his thoughts would attempt to take hold on the bliss of heaven, and realize the excellency of the river of life, a blistering thirst called back his desires to the sparkling waters, by whose side he was famishing. The physician's interdict he cared not a fig for, but he had not the power to reach the fountain himself, and the good people in whose care he was would have stood self-convicted of murder, had they aided him in the accomplishment of his supposed dangerous purpose, or even provided him with a single draught of the coveted beverage. At length there was a religious meeting in the neighborhood, and the family were desirous to attend it, but unwilling to leave the sick man. He urged them to go, assuring them that he should suffer no inconvenience from their absence, it being understood that Sally — a half idiot girl — would remain to take care of him. They finally yielded, and took their departure, greatly to the gratification of Bascom, who had little doubt of being able to prevail on Sally to aid his cherished object of getting a full satisfaction of cold water. Not content to have the water brought to him, he bribed Sally to assist him

down to the spring. This she did, and, having spread a blanket on the grass beside the spring, laid him upon it, and putting into his hand a long-handled gourd, with which he could reach the fountain, she set herself down in the shade, and laughed with idiotic heartiness to see the sick preacher drink and quaff, as if he would drink the very spring dry. Having drank until he could drink no more, he rested a while from the exertion, and then repeated the copious draughts to complete satiety, and then lay down to await quietly the fatal effects that were expected to follow this delightful indulgence. Soon, however, reaction took place; the patient was thrown into a profuse perspiration, the fever yielded, and from that hour he began rapidly to amend. By this circumstance, it is probable, the valuable life of this eminent servant of the church was saved, and his services secured to the world for thirty-five years longer.

We have already learned that after Bascom had made up his scanty outfit by the labor of his boyish hands, and had gone into the field of itinerant labor, depending on his salary to support him, to pay losses on books, and to contribute to the aid of his destitute father and family, he became involved in debt in a short time. When he went to this circuit he had been two years at hard, regular labor, for which he had

received eighty-two dollars and ten cents. Of course, his involvement was now greater than two years before. Kind friends here soon supplied the place of his thread-bare clothing with new, and were not long in finding out that he was in debt, and that his spirit was constantly weighed down by the indigence and want of his friends at home. His father was extremely poor, and his brothers and sisters growing up, not only without many of the comforts of life, but without the means of education. A wealthy and generous friend — Judge R. — projected a plan to raise some present relief. Grateful as this was to Bascom's feelings, his fears were painfully alive lest some one, to whom his friend might mention the subject, should suppose that he was playing the beggar, or that improvidence, indolence, or dissipation had brought his family into such straits. He therefore wrote to his friend:— "Should you speak to others about helping me or my father's helpless family, in our present extremity and indigence, let them know that I had not the meanness to beg it, but that though it will be gratefully received, it is wholly unasked — unsolicited by me. Let them know that I am incapable of receiving such aid without an honest intention on my part, should Heaven ever afford me the ability, to return it to the donors; let them know that no extravagance, intemperance,

or want of frugality or industry in any member of the family able to do service, has brought us to our present state of want, but apparently an order of Providence, that in this case honest frugality shall find its home in the home of poverty. It appears to me that it is either my duty to go home and remain there, or God intends by these grievous embarrassments to chastise me into proper humility; and designs to provide for us in some unknown way."

To what extent he was aided at that time is not now known, but had it been thousands, it would not long have served the purposes of his filial and fraternal generosity.

CHAPTER VII.

EMBRACING HIS FIRST YEARS IN TENNESSEE CONFERENCE.

End of the Year — Increased Reputation, but complained of about Dress — Aneedote — The Round Coat — Objeeted to before Conference — Case Debated — Proposes withdrawing from Conference — Interposition of the Bishop — Transfer to Tennessee Conference — Stationed at Danville — Character of the Work — His Health fails — Attends Springs — Associations at Harrodsburg — Conference at Franklin, Tennessee — Appointed to Danville and Madison with Wm. Adams — Character of Country and People — Reproof to the Sleeper and Talkers — Reproof — Bascom waylaid by the Offended — His Daring Conduet on the Occasion — First Acquaintance with Mr. Clay — Intimaey of their Friendship — Bascom's interposition in the Clay and Randolph Duel — Mr. Clay's denial of the report of his having educated Bascom — Attends Conference at Nashville — His Preaching — A Lady's Account of it.

DURING this year, Mr. Bascom's reputation as a pulpit orator had greatly increased, and his usefulness was unquestionable. After a laborious year of faithful and successful service, he went to the conference in the confident expectation that now, after an extra year of trial and improvement, opposition would cease, and he would be received into full connection, and admitted to orders without difficulty. With the people of his charge, including a number of intelligent local preachers, he was a great favorite at the end of the year, though at its beginning there was no small amount of prejudice

against him. This fact, it was presumed, would redound to his advantage before the conference, and there seemed scarcely room to doubt that an approving vote would be given by that body in his case. Yet farther disappointment and repulse awaited him. When his case came up, though his superior talents, his industry, his soundness in doctrine and discipline, and his usefulness, were acknowledged, and there was no accusation of unbecoming levity, of gallantry, or imprudence, still he did not dress like a Methodist preacher of that time, nor look like one, and it was doubted whether he would ever become a *real* Methodist preacher; and many of the venerable seniors of the conference felt bound in conscience to guard the church against one who, in their opinion, would be likely, by his example, to lead the membership away from primitive simplicity of dress and manners. There was, to be sure, nothing in the fashion of his apparel that would, at this day, be at all likely to give offence, for his dress was not more fashionable than that of young ministers of the present time ordinarily is, but more so than was common then. But the truth was, that there was more in an elegantly-erect form, and a light, elastic movement, than in his dress. Indeed, whatever he put on had a fashionable appearance. Of this I had an amusing evidence some years later. A stickler for old fashions urged Mr. Bascom to perfect his minis-

terial appearance by putting on a round breasted coat. Mr. B. said the coat he wore was a present, and though he thought it a more comfortable and *sensible* one as to form, than a round breasted one, if it had been of that antiquated fashion he would not, on that account, have refused it. "And if I give you as good a one, made in the latter fashion, will you lay that one aside, and wear the plain one?" inquired the old gentleman. "Certainly I will," was Bascom's prompt response. The coat was, accordingly, made in the most approved round breasted style, and put on. The material was fine, and the fit was as neat as that sort of article could be made to fit an elegant form; but what a disappointment to the good donor! For never did Bascom appear so much the perfection of dandyism in any dress he had ever worn. The disappointed old gentleman, after turning the preacher round and round, and inspecting him on every side, only to find that he had made a dandy instead of a plain Methodist preacher, was very willing to get his fine, plain coat off of a man whose very form seemed made to turn it into ridicule; but not so Bascom. "You have given me the coat, and I shall wear it, and especially as you seemed to think that I was too proud to wear a coat cut in the fashion of the last century." And wear it he did, all around his circuit, and, I believe, until it was worn out.

But to return to his case as it stood before the conference in 1816: the same objections and the same objectors, by which his defeat was brought about the year preceding, were still on hand, and opposed his advancement. True, the last year's predictions about his leaving the church, and all that, had utterly failed; but it was the easiest thing in life to assume their future fulfillment on his being admitted to orders. He felt deeply conscious that injustice was done his motives and his character, and his spirit was wounded to the point of anguish. He was not without ardent friends, who plead his cause with great earnestness, but *number* was evidently on the other side. The debate was protracted, and of its course and tendency he was, from time to time, advised by his friends. Exquisitively sensitive in his feelings, and conscious that he was grievously, painfully wronged, and likely to have his reputation, as well as his feelings, mangled in the strife, he could endure no longer, and, under the promptings of bitter chagrin, addressed a note to the conference, the purport of which, as nearly as I have been able to learn, was, that, as he semed to be a subject of contention and an object of distrust with them, and was likely to be the cause of dissensions among themselves, he preferred to ask no farther favors of them beside that of striking his name from their list of probationers, and he would try to

serve God and take care of himself as best he could, without their succor. This note was regarded by the party adverse to him as conclusive of a haughty and insubordinate, if not a contumacious spirit, and the majority were ready to dispense with his farther services. At this critical conjuncture, the venerable Bishop, who presided in the conference, interposed: —"Brethren," said he, "if you have no use for that boy in your conference, admit, and elect him, and I 'll take him out of your way, and take care of him." It was accordingly so done, and he was transferred to Tennessee conference — which then embraced the larger portion of the state of Kentucky — and appointed to Danville circuit.

Of the incidents, labors, and success of this year, I have but little information. The work was a heavy one, the settlements generally new, and a portion of the country then embraced in Danville circuit very rough, and before the year ended his health gave way, and he was compelled for a time to suspend regular labor. Harrodsburg was embraced in his circuit, and he spent his valetudinarian time chiefly at that place for the benefit of the medicinal waters of that locality, and the society of valued friends who resided there. Chief among these was Rev. Jesse Head, a local minister of considerable ability, and, whose influence doubtless had the effect to give shape

and character to some of Bascom's opinions held in after life.

At the Tennessee annual conference, held at Franklin, Tenn., Oct. 30, 1817, Mr. Bascom was re-appointed to Danville circuit, but this and Madison circuit were now united into one, and Rev. Wm. Adams was Bascom's colleague. The circuit as then arranged, embraced the large scope of country extending from the region of Harrodsburg up in to the mountains as far, I think, as the "Three forks" of Kentucky, including all the intermediate territory of Estill, Madison, Gerrard, Lincoln, and Boyle counties.

A rougher region it was difficult to find, either as regards the face of the country, or the character of many of the population at that time inhabiting the upper part of this circuit; but Bascom, having regularly *graduated* on Guyandotte, in the same sort of school, found little here that was not familiar to his experience. In dealing with those unpolished people the preachers were sometimes under an apparent necessity of resorting to measures which would seem singular among people of different character and habits.

On one occasion, while Bascom was preaching in Gerrard county, on a warm day, a gentleman sitting immediately in front of him fell asleep, and directly outside of the window back of the pulpit, two men commenced a conversation in so loud a

tone as to be heard through the open window, by a large portion of the congregation. Each of these circumstances annoyed him, and both together greatly embarrassed his feelings and his delivery. Finding it necessary to free himself from the difficulty he adopted the plan said to have once been pursued by the famous Rowland Hill of England. Turning to the window in the rear, he lowered his voice, and, addressing the talkers outside, said, "Gentlemen, I will thank you to speak in a lower tone of voice, or you will disturb my friend who is sleeping here in front of the pulpit." It need scarcely be added, that the rebuke hushed the talking, and thoroughly aroused the sleeper. And if Rowland Hill could request a man, in *his* refined congregation in England, "not to snore so loud, or he would wake Mrs. Hill," Bascom might be allowed a similar liberty in the back woods of Kentucky, at that early period.

At another time, while preaching at a place far up on the Kentucky river, he found it necessary to reprove some young men in the congregation, who were greatly disturbing both the preacher and the hearers. At this they took offence, and threatened vengeance on the preacher. The next day on his way towards the lower part of the county, he was informed that three young men, armed with bludgeons, having sworn vengeance for his rebuke, had gone forward to waylay and beat him as he

passed along, and he was earnestly admonished not to go that way, if he valued his safety or his life. Another gentleman had fallen in company with him, and on his declaring his willingness to accompany Bascom through the scene of danger, he at once resolved to go forward, and having provided himself with a stout stick, did so.

When Bascom and his traveling companion came in sight of a narrow pass on the mountain side, a few miles above where the town of Irvine now stands, sure enough, there were the three valorous champions, with coats off and sleeves rolled up, apparently ready and eager for bloody work. And that no chance of escape might be left, two were posted on one side of the narrow pass, and one on the other. This frightful array alarmed Bascom's companion, and his "courage oozing out" entirely, he declined advancing any farther; but on Bascom the effect was just the reverse. His dark brow was knit, his lips strongly compressed, every muscle seemed tense with concentrated resolve and courage, and his keen, penetrating eye, kindling to its intensest severity, seemed almost to shoot out arrows of flame. In this state, with an aspect terribly defiant, he rode forward, and as he approached, cast at each of the ruffians in turn, such a piercing glance, as seemed to penetrate them through, and caused them to quail and cower. Not one of the three dared to meet his scathing look; not one

dared attack him; not one had even the courage to speak, and Bascom rode on unmolested.

His friend now, seeing danger over, quickened his pace, and soon overtaking him, began to apologize for his cowardly desertion. Bascom replied, that he supposed the man's cowardice had been well punished by his shame, but that no such man could ride at his side, and accordingly required him to ride at a respectful distance behind him, which he did, until they parted.

It was in this year, or the preceding one, that Mr. Bascom made the acquaintance of that great statesman and orator — now lately deceased — Hon. Henry Clay. The latter, having himself a reputation for eloquence, equal, at least, to any man in the United States, was naturally attracted by young Bascom's fame as a pulpit orator, and went to hear him. His admiration of the power of oratory, strongly prepossessed him in favor of one who, though yet but a youth, was capable of exercising a power over the multitude by his commanding eloquence, which but few public speakers ever attain to. He sought an acquaintance with Bascom, and soon a friendship was formed between them which continued, without interruption or abatement, to the end of life, a period equal to one third of a century. Of this friendship, Mr. Clay himself says, in a letter written to me, between the time of Bascom's death and his own, "A friendship

between us was contracted, which lasted from early after our first acquaintance to the period of his death."

As an evidence of Mr. Clay's sincere regard for Mr. Bascom, we find among his papers a great number of Mr. Clay's letters to him, extending through a series of years, from the date of their first acquaintance until, by Bascom's removal to Lexington, they became near neighbors. These letters display not only friendship the most deep, but profound respect for Mr. B. as a minister of Jesus Christ, and frequent allusions to pious counsel received through his (Bascom's) letters. One of these letters, in particular, affords evidence of Mr. Bascom's faithfulness in warning the great to whom he had access, against sin. The unhappy difficulty between Messrs. Clay and Randolph, in 1826, was reported to Bascom, then at the house of his father. Fearing that it might result in a hostile meeting, he instantly wrote to Clay in a tone of earnest remonstrance, hoping to prevent such a result. In reply, Mr. Clay says: "I received your obliging letter the day after a late affair with Mr. Randolph. It could not have prevented that affair had it been received the day before. As no injury accrued to either party, my regrets are limited to the countenance which a pernicious practice may receive from our example, and to the violation of religious obligation. I pray

you to believe that I have witnessed your solicitude for my welfare with the highest gratification; and the moment at which I received your last, gave to its friendly counsel a touching interest."

On another occasion, Mr. Clay writes: "You see with what freedom I communicate with you, who are in the pursuit of much higher and nobler objects than any which belong to the party strifes of this wicked world. My confidence in, and friendship for you, must be my apology."

The intimate character of this friendship between these great men, gave rise to a widely circulated and extensively credited rumor, that Bascom was educated and brought into public notice by Mr. Clay. This report is utterly without foundation, for Bascom had acquired great fame as an orator, and had been five or six years in the ministry before Mr. Clay had seen or heard him at all. "It is not true," says Mr. Clay, in the letter above referred to, "as I have seen it stated, that I assisted him in his education." The truth is, Bascom was indebted, under the blessing of God, to his own exertions for his distinction. He had no preceptor, no patron, but on the other hand, obstructions were thrown in his way at almost every step, even by his own brethren.

During this year, Bascom filled a larger space in the public mind than ever before; his fame was such as to draw multitudes to hear him, and he became a special favorite with a number of the

most distinguished public men in Kentucky. The conference was held in Nashville, Tenn., October 1, 1818. A year before this Bascom had visited Tennessee for the first time, and his preaching at the conference at Franklin, had attracted such attention as to superinduce a strong anxiety among the people about Nashville, to hear the young "Kentucky orator," as he was popularly styled. At the conference he preached several times, with much power and popularity; his discourses were spoken of by some of the most prominent men in the community, as superior to any thing they had heard, — crowds thronged his appointments, and his reputation as a pulpit orator of high order was so firmly established in the public mind, that it still stood at the same high mark when he last visited the city, after an interval of near thirty years.

I have lately received from a literary lady who was one of his hearers, some account of Bascom's preaching at that conference. "He was," says she, "the most remarkable man I ever knew. He could not, I think, preach an indifferent, or even a medium sermon. Some, to be sure, objected to his ornate style, but to him it was perfectly natural. Had I *then* heard any one make this objection, I should probably have said, 'As well might you command the sun not to gild the clouds of evening, as to forbid Bascom, when

warmed with his subject, to clothe his burning thoughts with those brilliant gems that flash out so gloriously before our mental vision.' I almost think I would rather forget any other event of my life, than the exquisite pleasure I enjoyed in hearing him preach on the last day of the conference. His subject was the seventy-second Psalm, and he entertained us with a grand and beautiful panorama of the doings of the universal Lord. The past, the present, and the future all rose up before our view, radiant with the power, wisdom, justice and mercy of him, whose influences 'come down like rain on the mown grass.' My mind was so absorbed with the theme that I was scarcely more conscious of surrounding objects than if I had been in a blissful dream. The uncomfortable seat seemed pleasant, and when at the close it was said, that the discourse had lasted more than two hours, I knew not how to believe it, for to me the time had not appeared one third of that length." Such was the opinion of one of the literati of Nashville at that time, of the pulpit powers of Mr. Bascom, and such was the opinion of the community generally.

CHAPTER VIII.

BEGINNING OF HIS DIFFICULTIES ABOUT SLAVERY.

Continued Opposition to him in Conference — Strengthened by his Opposition to the Anti-Slavery party—Timely Interposition of his old friend McMahan — Elected to Elder's orders — Stationed in Louisville, Ky. — Difficulties attending his Administration.

BASCOM was now eligible to elder's orders, and his application to that effect came up before the conference in regular course of business. It was hoped that now, at last, opposition — not to use the harsher term persecution — would cease to follow this young minister, and allow him to go on uninterrupted in his promising career of usefulness; but still a portion of that pious and honest body of ministers could not get the consent of their own minds to advance him to a higher order in the ministry. The objections brought out on this occasion were the same heretofore noticed: sound in doctrine, unimpeached in moral conduct, faithful in discipline, and abundant in labors, he yet could not make himself look like an old-times Methodist preacher, nor did he restrict himself to homely phrase in his preaching, as some seemed to think him bound in duty to do. I cannot think, with a talented and venerable man who took part in the actings of that time, that the

opposers of Bascom "were under the influence of envy," because they were, no doubt, good men — at least with very rare exceptions — but they were certainly mysteriously blinded as to the true character of this young man, and the damage they would do the cause of Christianity in general, as well as Methodism in particular, by putting him down, or attempting to cast discredit upon him before the public. The truth is, this thing could not be done, because nothing had been brought against him to which the world, or even any other church attached any importance at all, and hence, by how much he was opposed by his own church, by so much the sympathies of all others clustered round him, until a very common objection to him came to be, that he was the idol of the worldly, and a favorite with the *popular* churches.

His old friend, Mr. McM., who had so faithfully stood by him in his Ohio difficulties, — and who was now in this conference by transfer — on a careful examination of the state of parties and feelings, became satisfied that the vote in Bascom's case would be a very close one, and that his friends had not a vote to spare, if indeed they had strength enough to carry him through at all. This opposition was the more formidable from the fact that the slavery question had divided the conference into two parties, and as Bascom had, the year before, acted with the minority party on this

subject, and so became measurably identified with it, and as the anti-slavery party was very jealous of any increase of strength in the adverse party, there was in this state of the case an additional ground for apprehension. Indeed, the opinion got some currency, that Bascom's alleged foppery was more the *pretext* than the real *cause* of most of the present opposition to his election, and that his course on the slavery subject had more to do with it than the cut of his coat or the style of his carriage. Be this as it might, his friend deemed it important to prevent his rejection, if possible; as a thing in itself unjust, and, in the current state of popular feeling in the city, calculated to bring injurious censure on the church. The late lamented Thomas Logan Douglass was known to be a warm friend to Bascom, and ready to employ his tongue and raise his hand in his behalf, but he was at home sick, more than twenty miles from the seat of the conference. Expecting the case to come up on a certain day, Mr. McMahan mounted his horse the previous evening and rode to the residence of Mr. Douglass, hoping to find him able to be brought to the conference, and aid his young friend through the present difficulty. The next morning he returned to the city, but before his arrival Bascom's case had been taken up, and zealously discussed *pro* and *con.* When he entered the conference-room, the leader of

what was then called the anti-slavery or abolition party was on the floor, making a speech of great severity against Bascom, by way of concluding the debate, and preparing the conference for a decisive vote of rejection. When the speaker took his seat McM. instantly took the floor, and in a most forcible speech advocated the claims of his young friend. The vote was taken and carried by a majority of *one* in favor of Mr. Bascom. This result was gratifying to the friends of Bascom, both in and out of the conference, especially as it was known that the anti-slavery party had a decided majority in that body.

At this conference Mr. Bascom was appointed to labor in the city of Louisville, Ky. Up to this time that city had belonged to Jefferson circuit. It was now set off as a separate station, and the task of organizing the new station devolved on him. The society was small, numbering only about one hundred members, white and colored, at the end of this year, and as there were among these several local ministers of age, who probably thought their years and standing entitled them to a chief control in regulating the affairs of the society, which the preacher in charge felt himself under obligations to supervise, his administration was beset with considerable difficulties. He, however, maintained his reputation fully, both as a pulpit man and an administrator.

CHAPTER IX.

DIFFICULTIES WITH THE SLAVERY LAW.

Conference of 1819 at Nashville — Historical Sketch of Slavery Law — Resolves and Action of Tennessee Conferenee — Case of Dr. Taylor — His rejection — Protest of Minority, and opposition of Majority — Bishops McKendree and George address the Conference in opposition to the Majority — Minory left out of Delegation to General Conference — They address the General Conference — Repeal by General Conferenee of Rule of 1812— Similarity of this Controversy to that of 1844.

At the next annual meeting of the conference, which was again held in Nashville — Oct. 1, 1819, difficulties which had begun to operate in the conference, at an earlier period, assumed a more serious phase; I speak of the slavery question. And as it was at this conference that Bascom became prominently identified with one of the parties, it seems proper, in this connection, to give a brief history of the matter, as it respects the Tennessee conference, and Mr. Bascom. There is another reason for doing so found in the fact that in later difficulties of this class, Mr. Bascom has been charged with inconsistency; and this charge can be met in no better way, than by showing the ground he occupied at the very commencement of his career as a member of the conference.

It will be recollected that the General Conference which met in May, 1812—and at which the

Tennessee conference was erected — adopted a resolution to the effect that "each annual conference should enact its own rules respecting the buying and selling of slaves,"* — every thing on this subject respecting private members, having been struck from the statute book in 1808. In the Tennessee conference, when organized in November of that year, (1812,) there was found a strong anti-slavery feeling, and a disposition to bring all under dealings, who were in any manner connected with slavery, and especially preachers. This is sufficiently evident from the fact, that a local preacher had been expelled just before the meeting of the conference for selling a slave, and that in the case of each applicant for admission into the itinerancy, the record shows that he was carefully 'examined on the subject of slavery,' as well as on 'doctrines and discipline.'

During the session of the conference, a rule was enacted, based on the grant of authority by the General Conference before referred to, requiring the preacher in charge of a circuit to bring before the quarterly conference any member of the church who might buy or sell a slave, and if that body was not satisfied that the purchase or sale was made according to '*justice* and *mercy*,' the offender was to be expelled, but with the rather incongruous right of appeal to the annual conference. A

* This was properly an amendment of a rule adopted in 1808.

conference held in October, 1815, at which Bishops Asbury and McKendree presided, declared the preceding rule '*unconstitutional*,' and a new rule was enacted, forbidding members to buy or sell for gain, or to sell to those who do buy and sell for gain; but they were permitted to buy or sell to keep husbands and wives, or parents and children together. Preachers were not to be ordained unless they were willing to emancipate their slaves, if practicable, 'conformably to the laws of the state in which they lived.' The conference of October, 1817, repealed all previous rules on the subject of slavery, and enacted one instead, the spirit of which was, that on buying slaves, the buyer was to submit to a decision of his brethren the question as to the length of time such slaves should serve, to remunerate the purchaser for his expenditure; and they were then to be free, if the laws would permit, without any liability on the part of the owner for the maintenance or good behavior of the slaves emancipated, &c. At the conference of 1818 this rule was also repealed, and the conference fell back on the law of 1800, '12, and '16, substantially as it now stands, requiring traveling preachers, and candidates for office in the church, to emancipate their slaves, where the laws permit, and allow the freed man to enjoy his liberty. The state of Tennessee did not permit the emancipation of slaves, except by special enactment, and in

Kentucky such emancipation was so embarrassed by liabilities enforced on the owner, as to amount to a moral prohibition.

At the conference of 1819, this subject was brought up fully by the case of Dr. Taylor. The conference record of this matter is — "Gilbert D. Taylor, recommended by the quarterly meeting conference of Shoal circuit, as a traveling preacher, on trial, was not admitted, in consequence of his holding slaves." It was admitted by the conference, that it was not practicable at that time for him to emancipate his slaves; for, after considerable debate, they authorized the presiding elder to employ him, on his giving assurance that he would emancipate his slaves "*when practicable.*" His friends thought the law of the church did not intend to require what was impracticable, as a condition of admission into the traveling connection, while the other party deemed it important to preserve the anti-slavery character of the conference, even though it should require individual sacrifice.

The full power and zeal of the parties were called out on the occasion, and the anti-slavery party gained the victory in the contest by a majority of about five. The minority was much disappointed at this result; so much so, as to record their protest against the proceeding. Mr. Bascom was in the minority, and was the writer of the protest.

Below we insert the protest at length: —

"Be it remembered, that whereas the Tennessee annual conference, held in Nashville, October 1, 1819, have taken a course in their decisions, relative to the admission of preachers on trial in the traveling connection, and in the election of local preachers to ordination, which goes to fix the *principle*, that no man, even in those states where the law does not admit of emancipation, shall be admitted on trial, or ordained to the office of deacon or elder, if it is understood that he is the owner of a slave or slaves: that this *course* is taken is not to be denied, and it is *avowedly designed* to fix the principle already mentioned: several cases might be mentioned, but it is deemed unnecessary to instance any except the case of Dr. Gilbert D. Taylor, proposed for admission, and Dudly Hargrave, recommended for ordination. We deprecate the *course* taken, as oppressively severe in itself, and ruinous in its consequences, and we disapprove of the *principle* as contrary to and a violation of the order and discipline of our church. We therefore do most solemnly, and in the fear of God, as members of this conference, enter our protest against the proceedings of conference as it relates to the above mentioned *course* and *principle*.

"Nashville, October 7, 1819. Signed, Thomas L. Douglass, Thomas D. Porter. William McMahan,

Benjamin Malone, Ebenezer Hearne, Lewis Garrett, Barnabas McHenry, William Allgood, William Stribbling, Timothy Carpenter, Thomas Stringfield, Benjamin Edge, Joshua Boucher, William Hartt, John Johnson, Henry B. Bascom."

The entering of this protest on the conference journal was strongly opposed, and the abolition party insisted on their right — being a majority, to vote it out, but the Bishop overruled the motion, and ordered the protest to record; yet, even after this order, the secretary — who was of the majority — made an attempt so to arrange the entry, that the bishop's signature attesting the record, should precede the protest, and so divest it of official character and validity.

The members of the minority party, though decidedly the more talented of the two divisions, were all left out of the delegation elected at that time to the General Conference of 1820. The attending bishops — McKendree and George — had, to be sure, taken decided ground with the minority, in addresses delivered before the conference, yet they (the minority) would have no one of their own body in the General Conference, to represent their views and wishes. They therefore, drew up an address to the General Conference, setting forth their grievances, detailing the proceedings of the dominant party, and praying that the power of legislating on the subject of slavery

might be taken out of the hands of annual conferences. In an appendix they gave the statutes against emancipation, which were in force within the territory of the Tennessee conference, with a legal opinion respecting those statutes drawn up by O. B. Hays, Esq., and approved by Hon. Felix Grundy. The preparing and printing of this address was entrusted to Mr. Bascom. It was intended only for members of the General Conference, and for the signers of it; for the desire was to keep this family feud from the world; accordingly, though a few copies were printed, it was not *published;* and at the close, Bascom certifies — in perhaps the only copy now extant — that the work had been done "in a manner *entirely private*, except the knowledge of the printer."

The striking similarity of this controversy to that of 1844 is remarkable. The minority, in this case, as in that, brought up the laws of the church, and of the state, and the opinions and constructions of eminent legal men to protect their course; — they contended that what the laws of the church did not require, and the laws of the state forbid, a Christian ought not to be compelled to do. But it seems that the Tennessee brethren were more ultra than their brethren of 1844, for they are reported as asserting that they were resolved to carry their point, because they had the strength of number to do so, and as intending to seek such a modification

of the slavery rule, as would finally exclude from the church all slaveholders, as well members as preachers. In short, they appear to have occupied very nearly the exact ground upon which the northern abolition party in the church now stand.

This movement is understood to have brought about the repeal, in the Genral Conference of the next year, (1820,) of the canon authorizing annual conferences to enact their own rules relative to buying and selling slaves.

We may here see, without ambiguity, the position taken on this subject by Mr. Bascom at that early date, and he himself informs us that his principles were settled on that point at a date seven years earlier by an address delivered by Bishop Asbury to the conference at Chillicothe in 1812.

From this conference (1819) Mr. Bascom was returned to Louisville for the next year. Difficulties which began to manifest themselves the previous year, came out during this in full development. The society was inharmonious, and a number of church trials, involving some of the principal members and local preachers took place; some of these were excluded from the church, and their friends sympathizing with them, a strong opposition was raised against Mr. Bascom's administration. Charges of mal-administration were presented against him to his presiding elder (the late Rev. Barnabas McHenry,) who, regarding

them as frivolous, or founded chiefly in prejudice, failed to have them prosecuted. Not succeeding in this proceeding, the dissatisfied parties followed both the preacher and his elder to the succeeding annual conference with sundry charges. The records of that conference show the presentment to the conference of those charges, and their investigation by a committee, but though Mr. McHenry incurred some ecclesiastical censure in the affair, it does not appear that any thing deserving reproof was established against Mr. Bascom. The year on the whole, was one of his most unpleasant ones.

Notwithstanding the opposition, a powerful body of friends stood by him. When he was about to leave the station, the following testimonial was signed by about one hundred and twenty of the most respectable men of the city:

THE subscribers, resident in Louisville, Kentucky, and its vicinity, understanding that Rev. HENRY B. BASCOM is about to take his leave of us as a minister, and, agreeable to the rules and regulations of the Methodist Church, will not be returned to us again the ensuing year — cannot, consistently with our *views* and *feelings*, and the high and increasing regard we have for Mr. Bascom, permit him to retire from among us, without expressing our sincere approbation of his public and private conduct, during a residence among us of about two years. He has occupied the pulpit with more than ordinary success, and almost universal acceptance; and in private life has exhibited proof of his uprightness of intention, and circumspection of behavior. "His praise is in all our churches." And we, in company with multitudes, whose names will not appear before you, would rejoice to see him returned again to this station, in 1821. If, however, this be found either inexpedient or impracti

:able, we feel it our duty to inform you, that he lives in the hearts, ınd memory of a grateful people.

Louisville, September 1820.

The following paper was also addressed to Mr. Bascom through the press, by the late Worden Pope, Esq :

Louisville, September 5, 1820.

Sir, — As a member of society here, and wishing the prosperity ›f the Methodist Church in this place, I should regret that past vents should remove you from amongst us. But I fear that the chisms in this church have assumed such a personal and angry ıttitude that they cannot be healed by any divine which shall be ent here. The church seems to be split into two *parties* who are truggling for victory, and the present angry feelings, will, it is ›clieved, continue and be displayed under any preacher who shall ›e sent to take care of, and preside over the church at this place.

It appears to me, that you ought to be supported by the head of he churches, by being returned to this place. Nothing will do ınless the preaeher shall be supported by the power which has the ight to give the law to the churches, and enforce it.

Your good standing in this place, as a man of talents, information ınd amiable manners, and sound morals, point you out as the ›reaeher who ought to be continued here.

I am, very respectfully, your most obedient servant,

WORDEN POPE.

Rev. H. B. BASCOM,

The conference of 1820 was held at Hopkinsville, Kentucky, October 4. An incident that occurred on Mr. Bascom's way to this conference, would seem to indicate that, in the opinion at least of some plain old Methodists of that time, he still wore but little of the appearance which a Methodist circuit preacher was expected to exhibit. On this journey he procured lodgings one night at the house of a plain old Kentucky farmer, of German

extraction. After matters were arranged and quieted for the evening, in a manner to invite conversation, the good host seemed inclined to find out something of the quality and destination of his gentlemanly looking guest; and Bascom, on finding the old gentleman's inquisitiveness, appears to have mischievously resolved to follow no lead given, but to answer questions only as they were put to him singly and pointedly. He has often related the dialogue to me, and it was very nearly in the following language.

Host. Traveling, I suppose?

Bascom. Yes, sir.

H. Wich way you from?

B. Northward.

H. Wat place in de nort?

B. Louisville.

H. You are going sout, I suppose?

B. Yes, sir.

H. How far?

B. Not out of this state.

H. To wat place?

B. To Hopkinsville.

H. You going to attend court dare?

B. No, sir.

H. You are not a lawyer, den?

B. No, sir, not a lawyer.

H. A doctor, may be?

B. No sir, not a physician.

H. You might be a bolitician, or a marchant?

B. Neither, sir,

H. Den wat is your brofession?

B. A preacher.

H. A breacher! A church clergyman, I suppose.

B. No, sir.

H. A Bresbyterian?

B. Not a Presbyterian preacher, neither.

H. Nor a Baptist?

B. No.

H. Den I gif it up: wat sort of breacher are you?

B. Methodist.

H. A *Methodist* breacher! Well, well; I dought I was a britty coot judge of Methodist breachers, but I declare if I was to go out to shoot methodist breachers, I nefer would snap at you for one.

CHAPTER X.

Kentucky Conference Formed, and Bascom falls into it — Sent to Madison Circuit — Supposed Object — His quiet Submission — A Turkey shot during Preaching — Storm on the Mountain — Shamed by the daring of the Mountain Girls — His Sister dies and bequeaths him the care of her Infant Daughters — Next Year Labors on Hinkston Circuit — Resolves to leave the Conference — Visits Ohio and Preaches — Transferred, and Appointed to Brush Creek.

THE General Conference, held in May of this year had provided for the creation of a new conference, embracing that part of the Tennessee conference, and that part of Ohio conference which lay in the state of Kentucky. The Tennessee and Kentucky preachers now met together for the last time in conference, and received their appointments; and this was the last of Bascom's connection with the Tennessee conference.

No bishop was present at the Hopkinsville conference, and the President *pro tem* was one of the leaders of the anti-slavery or abolition party, with whom Bascom was not at all a favorite. He was also understood as sympathizing with the party opposed to Bascom in the Louisville difficulties. Whether these circumstances had their influence in making the appointments or not, at least it is certain that some astonishment was expressed when he read out — "Madison circuit, Henry B. Bascom."

After seven years of regular work in the itinerancy, and at a time when he had more fame, probably, as a pulpit orator, than any other man in the south-west, it seemed singular that he should be sent to one of the most rough and unrefined fields of labor to be found in the whole conference; and generally, if not universally, both by friends and opposers, the proceeding was looked on, and spoken of, as intended to be punitive; but for what precise cause, or supposed offence was a matter to be conjectured.* Bascom, however, went quietly to his work, as if he had no suspicion of the motive which brought about the appointment, and was cordially welcomed back by his old mountain parishioners. The country was as rough as ever, and the people generally poor; but the very romantic wildness of the country was congenial with his feelings; the love of adventure and excitement here found more food than in the monotony of city life; and he enjoyed the rude hospitality of the sincere-hearted foresters, in coarse and scanty fare, more than he did the luxuries and display of the rich.

He used to tell, with much apparent pleasure, of a dinner he enjoyed with particular satisfaction.

* The late Rev. B. McHenry, in a letter dated May, 1821, informs Mr. Bascom that a certain preacher said, "We hope to get clear of Bascom this year, for he is sent to a hard mountain circuit, and we have no idea that he will submit to it."

He was preaching in a cabin, which was at once church and dwelling. The people were listening with seriousness and deep attention to the truths of the gospel, when, in the very midst of his sermon, his host, who sat near the door, suddenly rose from his seat, snatched the gun from two wooden brackets upon which it lay against the joist, went hastily out, fired it off, and returning, put the gun back in its place, and quietly seated himself to hear the remainder of the sermon. The whole affair had hardly consumed as much time as it requires to read this account of it, and in a very few moments all was going on as smoothly as if no interruption had occurred. After service was ended, Bascom inquired of the man the meaning of his strange conduct. "Sir," said he, "we were entirely out of meat, and I was perplexed to know what we should give you for dinner, and it was preventing me from enjoying the sermon, when the Good One sent a flock of wild turkeys this way; I happened to see them, took my gun and killed two at a shot; my mind felt easy, and I enjoyed the remainder of the sermon with perfect satisfaction."

On one occasion he was overtaken by a storm in passing over a mountain, not far from the three forks of Kentucky river. The peals of thunder and flashes of lightning were terrific, and his horse became so much frightened, that he could not in safety remain mounted; and alighting, he proceeded

on foot, leading his horse by the bridle. He seemed to be enveloped in a cloud heavily charged with electricity; and tree after tree was shivered by the destructive fluid near his path. Presently a bolt struck a tree at the very verge of his path, his horse fell to the ground, and he was, himself, much stunned by the shock. Recovering, however, he felt, as he declared, a very peculiar exhileration of spirits, a sort of excitement which he had never felt before, and never did afterwards, not very unlike the effect of inhaling exhilerating gas. He felt as if he must break out in vehement declamation, or shout to the mountains at the top of his voice. This effect remained for hours; and even after he had performed the religious services of the day — which were sufficiently excited and fervid — he still felt, as he supposed, like one intoxicated with spirituous drink.

On another occasion he was at the house of an old friend, on the Kentucky river, where he had preached in the day; and for the accommodation of some families residing at too inconvenient a distance to attend worship at the regular place, he had an appointment at night some three or four miles off in the mountains. The path was so steep and rough as to render it nearly impossible to pass over it on horseback, and he must therefore make the journey on foot, and as there were no accommodations for lodging at the place of

preaching, he must return after the meeting to the house of his friend on the river. The evening was cloudy and threatened a storm, and the prospect of threading this rugged path in the darkness of night, beset on every side by wolves and other wild beasts, perhaps under the peltings of an angry storm, and all for the purpose of preaching to four or five persons, was any thing but cheering; and, according to his own account, he felt inclined to find an excuse for neglecting the very uncovetable service. He consulted his friend, with the hope of securing his approbation in the course to which he was inclined. In the midst of this hesitancy, and when it had come to be time to start, the two stout, blooming and fearless daughters of his host began to rally him on the subject of his want of courage, and closed by saying: "We will go along with you, and keep the wolves off you;" and suiting the action to the word, they cast on their sun bonnets, called up three or four large dogs, and in a few moments were bounding away towards the mountain gorge by which he had to pass out, with the dogs following, and the young preacher, more than half ashamed, pressing hard on the rear.

Within this year his sister Clara, who had been married several years, died. Henry was her great favorite, and she, in her last moments, bequeathed her two infant daughters to him. He became a

father to them, supplied their wants, had them well educated, and had the pleasure to see them married to honorable and pious husbands, and comfortably settled in life, and to be well assured that they were entirely worthy so advantageous an alliance. "No father," says a friend, speaking of the case, "ever felt more tender solicitude for the welfare of his own children, than did Bascom for the sacred bequest of his dying sister."

The next year he was appointed to labor on old Hinkston circuit — the *third man* — showing that there was still an influence working adversely to him.* This opposition he felt to be oppressive, and thought it unjust, and therefore resolved to make an effort to take himself out of its way. With this view, and for the purpose of being nearer to his father, who was now growing old and rather infirm, he procured a transfer to the Ohio conference, in which his ministerial career had been commenced. A short time before his transfer, he came over into Ohio, and attended a camp-meeting on Brush Creek circuit, not far from West Union. Here I met him after a separation of six years. At that separation — in 1816 — he was a youth, in the fourth year of his ministry, now he was in

* That the talents and faithfulness of Mr. Bascom were not, however, wholly unappreciated by the conference, we have evidence in the fact that they elected him to the responsible post of committeeman, to co-operate with the committee of the Ohio conference in the establishment and organization of Augusta College.

the tenth year of his ministry, and had acquired an extended fame as a pulpit orator. As no man had been more largely debtor to his early ministrations than I, so no one could be more eagerly anxious to hear him again than I was. And hearing him, my extravagant expectations were more than realized. All appeared delighted, and multitudes were deeply impressed by his sermons. Old people talked with pride of his having started from among them but a few years previous, an untaught boy, and each one seemed ambitious of the honor of having, in some way, aided to "bring him out," and now each one had foreseen from the first that he "was to become a great man some day." At the conference of that autumn he was appointed to that — Brush Creek — circuit.

CHAPTER XI.

CHURCH REFORM, ETC.

First Conversation on that Subject — History of the "Suspended Resolutions" — Bascom's Views and Feelings — Sent to Steubenville Station — Elected Chaplain to Congress.

In riding together on horseback more than a hundred miles, to attend the conference, the subject of a change in the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church was first introduced by him. As his relation to this subject must, in justice, occupy a place in this biographical sketch, it may be as well to call it up in this place.

At the General Conference of 1820, it was proposed by a part of the delagates so to change the mode of appointing presiding elders, that instead of being appointed by the bishops, they should be elected by the members of the annual conferences. The question was warmly contested; in favor of the change it was argued, that as the presiding elders had the oversight of the preachers in the absence of the bishops, these preachers ought of right to elect the men by whom they were to be governed; on the other side, it was contended, that the presiding elders were properly the officers of the bishop, deputed by him to attend to certain duties in his stead and in his

absence, and it was fit and proper that the bishop should have the appointment of his own agents by whom he was required to carry on the great itinerant machinery of the church. Finally, it was agreed to refer the subject to a committee of six members, — three from each side, — who were instructed to report some compromise measure, upon which the parties might harmonize. Such a plan the committee reported, and the conference adopted with considerable unanimity. But shortly afterwards, a bishop *elect*, and a bishop in *office*, reported to the conferences, that, believing the new rule to be in violation of a constitutional restriction on the power of the General Conference, they could not, in good conscience, enforce the rule in their administration. This declaration created no small excitement in the body; the bishop elect especially, was censured by one party for a supposed attempt to exercise a veto power, even before ordination, while the other applauded him for his independence and vigilance in guarding the constitution. The new rule was finally suspended for four years, but its suspension, with the attendant circumstances, caused an excitement to go out from the conference, which spread, first among the preachers, and then among the people, until it resulted in the secessions of 1828 – 9.

At the date of which we are speaking, (1822,) the subject under notice had not attracted very

general attention in the west, but it was now beginning to be talked of — among the preachers more particularly. A periodical had been commenced at Trenton, New Jersey, in 1821, which soon came to be devoted chiefly to the discussion of church politics; a few copies of this work had been distributed through the west, and it had fallen into the hands of Mr. Bascom. I learned from him, that a course of treatment of which he had said little or nothing, but which he looked on as oppressive and unjust, had prepared his mind to look to the polity of the church as the source of his wrongs. With feelings chafed and sore, he was not tardy in imbibing most of the leading views and opinions respecting church government, which appeared in the periodical already mentioned. He, however said very little on the subject, and took no active part in the proceedings of the day, to promote a change in the government until several years later.

The year from the autumn of 1822 to 1823, was marked by nothing remarkable in the personal history of Mr. Bascom. At that period the Ohio conference was separated from the Baltimore conference by the Ohio river, consequently the town of Steubenville was embraced in the first named conference; and to that station Mr. Bascom was appointed in the autumn of 1823. About the time at which he became fairly settled in his new

station, a company of members of Congress from the great west, entered the mail coach at Wheeling, Va., on their way to Washington city. Among the topics of conversation introduced on the journey, was that of the chaplaincy to Congress. Different ministers of distinction were named by different members of the company with such laudatory remarks as their several preferences suggested. Finally Mr. Clay, who was one of the company, declared his firm belief, in very strong language, that his young friend Bascom could outpreach all their preachers together, and proceeded in such a strain of eloquent eulogy on the superior talents of Mr. Bascom as brought, I think, every member present fairly over to the support of Mr. Clay's nominee; and it was there agreed that they should unite on Bascom as the western candidate for the chaplaincy of the House of Representatives. On reaching the city, they carried their proposition into effect, and elected Bascom triumphantly over all opposition. Of all this he knew nothing until it was over, and he was notified of his election. He obeyed the call, and, without unnecessary delay, went on to enter upon the discharge of his new duties.

CHAPTER XII.

Bascom's Debut before Congress — Causes of comparative Failure — Prejudices of Methodists against him — Preaches in the Country to the Blacks — Amusing Incident — Visits Baltimore, but does not Preach — Attends a Wedding, and takes firm stand against *Plays* — Takes Passage for the West — Hindered by sickness of his Friend, whom he attends — Attends a Camp Meeting near Annapolis, and Preaches like himself — Visits Annapolis and Baltimore — His Preaching in Baltimore — Visits Great Falls Camp Meeting — Visits Baltimore Camp — His great Sermon there — Description of it by a lady — Frederick Camp — His Preaching — Bishop Waugh's Account of.

MR. BASCOM'S *debut* at Washington, it may as well be confessed, was a failure.* This was owing to several causes; among them the following: — The eulogies of Mr. Clay, and of other friends, had raised expectation so high that it was nearly impossible for any man to measure up to the high standard. The general prevalence in the west and south-west of a peculiar species of Unitarianism had caused many of the more able of the orthodox clergy to get much into the habit of preaching

* This discourse was a failure only relatively as compared with Mr. Bascom's sermons generally. A gentleman of competent judgment, who heard it attentively himself, says, in a letter before me — "Mr. Bascom was unfortunate in the length of his sermon; this was the only objection I heard to it at the time; although I should not myself regard it as a valid one by any means; yet in a promiscuous audience it might be so considered by many. It was pronounced by many men of first respectability and intelligence, a display of mind and energies to which few can lay valid claim.

long controversial sermons, and especially on that particular point of doctrine; into this habit Mr. Bascom had fallen, and unhappily he seemed to overlook the fact that members of Congress have a great horror of long sermons, and of controversial ones, and that a large proportion of the northern members were actually Unitarian in sentiment. Besides, there was in his composition a singular timidness, which utterly disqualified him for making his way among strangers. In this state of things he made his appearance in the hall of Congress, a total stranger to every one, save some two or three members of Congress; the audience, the scenery, the circumstances — everything around him was new, strange, and to his mind embarrassing. He passed through the introductory services hurriedly, and with a manner that plainly indicated that he did not feel at home. He selected a text and entered upon his discourse, but he had not his usual freedom of utterance, and frequently hesitated in his words. After a time he appeared less embarrassed, but still when he looked over his audience, instead of the willing, warm and deeply interested audiences he had been accustomed to address in the south-west, he saw only an assembly of stern, cold critics, and the conviction of this fact seemed to freeze his feelings. Still he struggled on, hoping to rise above the power of depressing circumstances; yet the atmosphere

around him seemed more and more frigid and oppressive. Eloquent in language, and powerful in argument, he certainly was in that discourse; but it was not that free résistless eloquence and argument to which his western audiences had been accustomed to listen, enraptured for hours. After laboring say two hours — Mr. Clay said in a letter to me, a few months before his death, he thought it three — he closed with an evident feeling of mortification and disappointment, and in the latter feeling, if not the former, many of the audience seemed to sympathize fully.

Bascom was not a man who could readily rise above the influence of such a discomfiture, and during his stay in Washington he never so far recovered as to be properly himself. Even the members of his own church set a most unjust estimate on his talents, and in many instances spake slightly of him as minister and a Christian. His health during most of the winter was bad, consequently he made few acquaintances, and preached but little. He was in a manner buried. A few times he went into the country and preached; on these occasions he was more himself, yet not fully so.

On one of these occasions he preached to a large congregation of colored people in Prince George's county, and, as his sermon contained a large portion of life and energy, his African auditors became

much excited, and some of them indulged in those extravagant bodily exercises so common among them under religious excitements. One of them, in his pious frenzy, threw his head convulsively back and struck an elderly negro by the name of Davy an unmerciful blow on the nose. Davy, being thus suddenly disturbed in his quiet enjoyment, and withal badly battered by the blow, was thrown off his guard, and sent back the compliment in the form of a smart blow with the fist, dealt upon the back of his unquiet neighbor. The latter turning quickly about, inquired who had struck him. "I did," responded Uncle Davy. "What for you strike me?" "What for you break my nose wid your head?" "Becase I so happy," responded the other. "Will den," said Davy, "when eber you get happy for mash my nose, den I get happy for maul you in de back, sure." Bascom knew nothing of this farce at the time, but the minister at whose invitation he was preaching sat near enough to see and hear it all, and he related it to the writer.

The winter months passed sluggishly away, and in March the writer of this sketch visited Bascom in Washington, and was not a little afflicted to find him in poor health and spirits, almost wholly unappreciated, indisposed to extend his acquaintance in the east in any quarter, and eager to return to his beloved west as the Indian to fly from the

artificial of civilized life to his wild forest home. His friend urged him to visit Baltimore and make the acquaintance of leading members and ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church in that city. But no; he said Baltimore Methodists had joined the hue and cry against him, and he did not feel that he had any call to preach in that city. He was desirous to see the place, but pre-determined not to preach there. To accommodate this whim, it was agreed to visit Baltimore near the close of the week, say on Friday, and to prevent his preaching in the city on Sabbath, his friend made two appointments for him, the one in the afternoon being at Elkridge Landing, within seven miles of the city.

During his short stay in the city, he made the acquaintance of several persons, whom he regarded as special friends to the end of his life, and a great desire was expressed that he should preach in the city. As this could not now be, in consequence of the previous arrangement made to prevent it, a large number of persons from Baltimore came out to hear him at his afternoon appointment in the country. He was at liberty in preaching, and the desire now became much stronger than before, that he should preach in the city; but he promptly declined the pressing invitations given him, and returned to Washington.

An incident in this connection may be worth mentioning, as showing one feature of Bascom's

character. He and his friend were traveling in the same vehicle, and as the latter had to solemnize a marriage on the way back to Washington, he took Bascom with him. The young lady belonged to a pious Methodist family, but the young gentleman, who was gay and fashionable, had brought with him from the city a number of young friends, of tastes similar to his own. The marriage took place after dark, and the ministers were expected to remain for the night. Soon after supper plays were introduced, such as are spoken of as "innocent," but certainly silly, undignified, and of evil tendency, such as "Sister Phebe," and others of like character, the capital object of which is to bring the sexes into such contact, as under other circumstances, would not be considered the most delicate and modest. As Bascom was styled the "fashionable preacher," it seemed not to be doubted that he would enter into the enjoyment of these frivolities. He was accordingly invited, but the repulse he gave was so stern and abrupt, that there was no danger of his being troubled farther on that subject. Not satisfied with this, he spoke out fearlessly in condemnation of such amusements as utterly unfit for professors of religion, and sadly out of place in the house of a member of the church. This, he hoped, would put a check to the proceeding; but finding that he could not succeed in this, he promptly resolved that he would not remain in the

house where such proceedings were carried on. Owing to the darkness of the night, and the difficult character of the way, it was out of the question to think of going away on wheels, and accordingly he ordered his horse, borrowed a saddle, and leaving his friend behind, sought his way out to the public road, and thence to a tavern, where he tarried for the night, and returned in the morning for his friend and vehicle. This step gave lasting offence to a portion of the company, including several professors of religion, who had engaged in the amusements of the night; but, perhaps, no man ever was more indifferent than Bascom to opposition elicited by a stern adherence to what he regarded as Christian principle.

The session of Congress finally closed, I think, in the early part of June, and Bascom, anxious to return to the West, had himself booked for the western stage, to go out the morning succeeding the adjournment. Just at this conjuncture, a providential circumstance strongly developed another trait in his character, which deserves to be understood. After he had entered his name and paid his passage across the mountains, his friend — above alluded to — came into the city sick. No sooner was this known to Bascom, than he hastened to his bed-side, and finding him with a high fever, went himself for a physician immediately. The attack proved stubborn, and though his friend was

well provided for, in a hospitable and kind family, with every attention necessary, this would not satisfy Bascom; but, withdrawing his name from the stage-coach book, he took his position by the bed of his sick friend, and there remained day and night, administering medicine, and performing all possible kind offices, until the disease was fairly subdued, and the patient able again to go out on the discharge of the duties of his vocation.

This circumstance not only tended to prove how wholly devoted he was to his friends, but it incidentally exerted an important influence over his subsequent course for years. Just as Bascom was thinking of making another effort to return to his western home, his friend urged him, with much importunity, to attend with him a camp meeting on South river, some ten miles from Annapolis; and this was done under the conviction that if Bascom could be fairly brought out on his favorite theatre — a forest camp meeting — "Richard would be himself again." And so it proved; for at that meeting he preached with an eloquence and power that had not been heard in any of his discourses previously delivered in that region.

It was his purpose to return at the close of the meeting to Washington, and thence over the mountains without delay, but at this meeting he became acquainted with a number of prominent members of the church from Baltimore, Annapolis,

and several other places, and to some of them he became much attached,-and he was not now so well prepared to resist their earnest solicitations for him to visit and preach in their respective cities, as he was before making their acquaintance. The result was, that before separating, Bascom had given a promise to visit several of those cities before returning home. In fulfillment of that promise he went from the camp meeting to the city of Annapolis, and there preached to an admiring multitude. From that place he went to the city of Baltimore, where, by this time, his fame had began to be sounded abroad, and a great desire to hear him prevailed in the community.

His first appointment in Baltimore was on Thursday night, in the old Light street church. The congregation was large and deeply attentive; and though the preacher did not enjoy his usual liberty, his discourse was received with general gratification, not to say enthusiasm, by the audience. The writer asked the opinion of one who was at that time regarded as the most eloquent Methodist minister in the city, and who had, from rumor, conceived a strong prejudice against the preacher. His answer was, in substance: "I had utterly misapprehended the character of Mr. Bascom's talents; I had been led to believe that his sermons were made up of pretty borrowings and stealings from poets and

other elegant authors; but, though he was clearly not at liberty to-night, yet there was an originality of thought, and a strength of frame work in his sermon that none but a master could originate and put together."

On the Sabbath following he preached again, and the same respectable minister was inquired of respecting the performance. "I will answer," said he, "by saying that I abhor long sermons, and that he preached nearly two hours; I not only had to stand all the time, but to stand in a crowd, and yet I was not tired, and did not think the sermon more than half an hour in length."

From this time Bascom was almost an idol with the people of Baltimore generally, and there was no house in the city of sufficient capacity to accommodate his audiences. A week or two after this he attended a large camp meeting, fourteen miles from Baltimore, near the York road. Here his preaching was overwhelmingly powerful and brilliant, and the universal verdict appeared to be that never had such preaching been heard in that country. His fame flew on the wings of all the winds, and people came twenty and thirty miles to hear him preach a single sermon.

At this meeting, he for the first time met with the late Rev. Nicholas Snethen, who, in his prime, was regarded as the most eloquent and effective *field-preacher* that the Methodist Church in

America had produced. The "old man eloquent" appeared greatly delighted to find himself so effectually superseded on his own favorite field of glory, by the young orator of the west, and before the meeting closed he had taken a promise from Bascom to attend a camp-meeting in Frederick circuit, near Mr. Snethen's residence, and not far from the old Straw Bridge meeting house — the first Methodist house of worship erected in Maryland, if not in America. He at the same time engaged to attend a camp meeting, to be held soon after on Baltimore circuit, some twelve or fifteen miles from the city. Afterward, when notes came to be compared, it appeared that these two meetings were to come off at the same time. Bascom had promised, under a mistake at the time, to attend both, and as neither party would relinquish the claim, it was in the end agreed that he should attend the Baltimore camp from its commencement — Thursday — until the Sabbath, and then go to the other — a distance of twenty miles, and remain from Monday morning until the meeting ended — Wednesday.

When the time arrived, Mr. Bascom, accompanied by his friend, attended the Baltimore camp. A large number had encamped on the ground, the congregation was very large, and Bascom preached very much as of late he had been accustomed to preach — to the admiration of all, and the profiting

of thousands. But the Sabbath was the great day of the feast; it seemed as if the country and city had poured out their vast aggregate of population, and the congregation was immense. At eleven o'clock Mr. Bascom entered the pulpit all trembling with the weight of his fearful responsibility, — the very leaves of his hymn book rattled with the tremor of his hand, while he read his hymn. His theme was the great Gospel Commission, and never did even *he* treat that sublime subject with so much grandeur and power. He had not preached much over half an hour, until every soul in the vast assembly was up and pressing toward the stand, amazed, weeping, wonder-stricken. The stillness of death reigned, save that, in his momentary pauses, a burst of feeling would gush out involuntarily; but the moment he resumed, all was checked and hushed. But when, near the close, he came to dwell on the encouragement vouchsafed to the faithful minister of grace, as found in the promise of the Saviour, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world," there was an unutterable unction, which seemed to fall like rain on the assembly, and the outbursts of deep feeling could no longer be held in restraint. In the midst of his thrilling description of the sustaining power and presence of the Saviour — supporting the faithful minister under his burden of toil and trial, whispering, when all other

friends deserted, "Lo, I am with you," soothing his anguish on the bed of sickness, and going with him through the cold stream of death — when he appeared to have said all that could be said, and every heart responded, "It is enough," his eye lit on two very aged ministers, Rev. Nelson Reid and Rev. Joseph Toy, the latter entirely blind, and both trembling on the very verge of the grave; and when he saw them smiling through their tears, and clinging with the strength of a death-grip to the glorious promise, whose divine treasures he was unfolding, he exclaimed, as no man could, "Think you, that the Author of this divine promise is going to desert a Toy in his blindness, or a Reid in his age and infirmity, after they have worn life out in his cause? Never, never, never! Faithful fathers, it was Jesus who just now whispered, 'Lo, I am with you.'" I know, that this imperfect description can give the reader no adequate idea of the scene. To obtain this, he must imagine the pitch of intense feeling to which the mighty multitude was wrought up; he must imagine before him the two venerable ministers, furrowed, bent, gray, blind, trembling with age, and trembling, yet more violently, with deep emotion; he must see them, as the night-fall of death is closing around them, clinging, with delighted confidence, to the omnipotent promise of Christ, as one sinking in the deep dark sea clings

to the spar thrown out to him; he must conceive of the almost supernatural manner and inspiration of the preacher, and the peculiar crisis—the flood-tide of feeling at the moment; and then, in such a state of things, see the preacher turn to the old time-worn ministers, and make a personal application of the promise to them, in such a manner, that one seems to hear the voice of Christ himself addressing them from Olivet, by name. Then, only, may he form some idea of the powerful effect.* That effect was like sheet-

* The following animated description of that sermon was written at the time by a lady of Baltimore, in a letter to her friend, and appeared in some of the periodicals of the day:

"The horn blew, the noise ceased, the gathering crowds dispersed, and each one sought a seat. An awful stillness reigned — every thing seemed to give magic and grandeur to the scene — the winds of heaven were lulled, and scarce a breeze ruffled the trees — the very birds ceased their vocal melody — expectation sat on every face — when, lo! this wonder from the west arose. Every eye brightened, and every ear was attentive. Dignity marked his deportment, and intelligence flashed from his keen eye. He appeared like the genius of the forest, whose lowering oaks overshaded him, come to hunt infidelity from the earth, and to extirpate deism for ever. Never, perhaps, was there a more magnificent display of oratory. On the missionship and regal dominion of Christ, he was sublimely grand beyond description. His style and language are energetic and vehement — he is like a mighty torrent, impatient of restraint, and rolls with such impetuosity, that you are compelled to follow. In his flights, he moves with the velocity of a whirlwind; in the same moment, he will take you to heaven, and dive with you to hell. He triumphantly answered every argument a Paine or a Voltaire could advance; he defied the infidel to trace time and search the chronicles of eternity, and find a parallel to the sacrifice of the Saviour of the world; he bid the philosopher go on contemplation's trembling wing, and reason, with her glimmering light,

lightning, on the whole assembly, and, above all, on those old veterans of the cross. The burst of feeling was tremendous; and the preacher, completely exhausted by two hours of extraordinary exertion, sat down amid sobs, and tears, and shouts of joy.

On the afternoon of that day, Mr. Bascom and his friend rode to the house of Col. Guest, a venerable officer of the revolution, and the next morning to the Frederick camp. The number of persons encamped on the ground was supposed to be even

assist — and what could they do against the Gospel? Though founded by a Jewish peasant —propagated and handed down by a few poor fishermen selected from a Gallilean shore — yet, even these men had shaken imperial Rome to her centre, and confounded Greece with all her learning. This Gospel was now riding throughout the world in triumph; and pagan temples of the East were falling, and the mosque of the musslemen was crumbling, and the rose of Sharon should yet bloom in the desert, and blossom on the mountains of eternal snow. His description of what a faithful minister ought to be, exceeded even Cowper on Paul. He must have had an eye that never winked, a judgment that never erred, and a wing that never tired. He was to go wherever misery was to be found, or man reclaimed; he was to consider this earth as his birth-right, the world as his parish, and the universe as his diocese; he was to freeze under the pole of the north, and burn under the line of the south; he was not to shrink from the palace of infidelity, or tremble at the chair of magistracy; for he had the promise of the Saviour: "and lo! I am with you always." He preached until he was exhausted, and was compelled to cease. The words last uttered were responded by many, and vibrated on the listening multitude — "Glory to God in the highest." Never could he have been more gratified than on that day — hundreds and thousands of people, among whom were beauty and talents, all gazing in mute astonishment at this star from the West — this Kentucky orator — this American Cicero." M******.

greater than at the other camp; and as an appointment had been published on the Sabbath for Bascom to preach on this morning, at eleven o'clock, his spreading fame had attracted a large additional number to hear the great orator. But his exertions on the preceding day had overtasked his physical energies, and when the hour for preaching was at hand, it was found that he had to retire to bed instead of going into the pulpit, and his place had to be supplied by his friend.

By the preaching hour in the afternoon, he had become so much better as to be able to preach, but in a guarded and cautious manner. His sermon was of an expository and practical character, intended to accommodate his inability to put forth strong and continuous effort. In the stand, behind the preacher, was no common array of talent — the present Bishop Waugh was in charge of the circuit, and Mr. Snethen was one of the auditors. Of the eloquence of the latter, we have already spoken. It was said that a camp meeting sermon of his, in his palmy days, so effectually bewildered the brain of the late Bishop George, that he acted like one bereft of reason — attempting, among other strange acts, to climb a tree which stood on the camp ground. But this great master was now sitting at the feet of a mere youth, to receive, with a child-like docility, instructions or impressions of good. In the course of his sermon, Mr. Bascom had occasion

to speak of the devices of Satan, and it must be confessed that some features of the protean portrait were sufficiently startling. Now the arch fiend was detected as the wily serpent hidden in the flowery grass, ready to strike the deadly fang into the foot, and send the killing poison through the veins of the unsuspecting pilgrim; now he appeared an angel of light, offering his tempting suggestions under the guise of messages of mercy fresh from the throne of Heavenly Goodness; or, armed with power, he was seen coming up in his wrath, the furious Lybian lion, whose terrible roar made the hills to tremble, spreading death and desolation in his bloody march. As he was finishing his startling picture, Mr. Snethen, apparently unconscious of the place and circumstances around him, turned to the other preachers by his side, and audibly exclaimed, "Brethren, he frightens me; he frightens me! I never was afraid of the devil before in all my life!" And as he spake, tears rolled down his venerable face. Such was the effect of this discourse on the congregation, that scores on scores were cut to the heart, and cried for mercy. Indeed such was the depth of this work on the hearts of the people, that there was found no more place for preaching until the next day. All the remainder of the day, and through the entire night the encampment was vocal with the groans and sobs of penitents, and the rejoicings of new born converts.

The next morning Mr. Bascom was feverish, and evidently unfit for farther exertion, yet such was the universal desire to hear him again, that he yielded to it, contrary to the convictions of his own judgment, and against the earnest remonstrance of his friend—who readily enough foresaw the consequences. His subject was one which called into full action all his powers of mind and body, and the effect on the audience was tremendous. He preached until his strength was entirely gone, and then sank down utterly powerless. He was assisted to bed, and in fifteen minutes from the time of leaving the stand he was wildly delirious with a raging fever, and making incoherent efforts to finish his sermon.* Good physicians and careful nursing, however, soon overcame the disease, and in two days he was able to return to Baltimore.

* The following account of his preaching at the last named meeting, and of his talents, is from the pen of the present Bishop Waugh:

"Mr. Bascom preached at four o'clock, on the subject of practical Christianity. In our judgment it was one of the most masterly discourses we ever listened to. It was heard with great interest. Many were convinced that they were 'wanting' by being thus weighed in the 'balance of the sanctuary.' On Tuesday Mr. Bascom again preached. His subject was, the evidences of the Christian religion. Here, he, if possible, exceeded his discourse on Monday. It is not our purpose to eulogize the preachers in this communication, yet a man so remarkable for intellectual greatness, presents such an occasion to contemplate the dignity of our species, that we beg indulgence while we bring him more fully before those who had not the happiness to see and hear him. Mr. Bascom is about twenty-eight years of age. He has been a Methodist itinerant minister for nearly twelve years. His enunciation is very distinct, and his delivery uncommonly rapid. His conceptions are strong and forcible. The most choice language conveys the finest sentiments to his delighted

CHAPTER XIII.

On his return to Baltimore he found a messenger from the peninsula, or eastern shore of Maryland, awaiting his return, to take him over the Chesapeake bay to a camp-meeting then in progress. After the meeting had been continued several days, it was resolved to continue it still a week longer, in hope of getting Mr. Bascom to it before the close. He could not resist this strong appeal, and the next day crossed the bay, and labored with his usual zeal and success among the people of the peninsula for some time.

The eastern shore of Maryland then, as now, belonged to the Philadelphia conference, and, of course, this visit introduced him to the society and acquaintance of several preachers of that conference. Some of these were from the city of Philadelphia, and they became very desirous that Mr. Bascom should visit their city, and one of

audience. He has a bold enterprising mind, of ample powers to bear him out in all his undertakings. He is an original. He is like no man that we have ever heard. Perhaps his style bears a nearer resemblance to that of the celebrated Chalmers, than any other. We do not pretend to have done ample justice to this great man, in the feeble attempt we have made to exhibit him to the mind of the reader. Permit us then to add, that we have heard many great men, but he exceeds them all."

them came over to Baltimore with him to carry his desire into effect, if possible. For the time being the messenger failed of his object, but in a short time another came, who was more persevering and importunate. Mr. Bascom, believing that he was the most unsuccessful man of a thousand to introduce himself into a strange community, refused to go unless arrangements should be made which would enable his friend to accompany him. The people of Baltimore, however, soon provided for such an arrangement, and it was accordingly made.

It was now September, 1824, and as the Marquis de La Fayette, the early and firm friend of American independence, had arrived on our shores, and was in a short time to be received in the city of Baltimore, the journey was delayed a few days, for the purpose of witnessing that pageant of gratitude. That reception was grand beyond description. — Thousands of volunteers, elegantly equipped, cavalry caparisoned in the most splendid manner, triumphal arches, a universal and magnificent illumination, and every thing that gratitude or pride could suggest, or wealth could procure, to render the welcome of the nation's guest brilliant and imposing, was pressed into the service on that occasion. Mr. Bascom was one of a select few invited to the honor of a private interview with the great colleague of Washington, on the evening of that day.

On the evening of the next day, Mr. Bascom, with his traveling companion, started for Philadelphia. The trip was expeditiously performed for that time, but there were some things about it entirely new to the western orator, and which would, just now, be equally novel to those who make the same journey by the present improved mode of conveyance.

At the appointed hour, a large crowd assembled on the steamboat, and were soon under full headway for the destined port. As there were many more passengers than berths, there were put into a hat as many *numbers* and *blanks* together as there were passengers. On paying his passage-money, the passenger thrust his hand into the hat and drew out a ticket; if he drew a number, he had the privilege of occupying the berth to which it belonged until about midnight — the usual time of debarkation; if a blank, he had the privilege of sitting up for the same period. This point of debarkation was Frenchtown, a village at the head of navigation on Elk river, chiefly famous for the uncivilized warfare waged on the. unoffending denizens, by Admiral Cockburn, of the British navy, during the war of 1812. At this place the boat landed at twelve o'clock, on a pitchy dark night. The next thing to be thought of, was the means of getting from this place across the state of Delaware, a distance of sixteen miles, to Newcastle, on the

Delaware river, where another boat was to be taken for Philadelphia. This portage had to be passed in coaches of such capacity as to carry nine passengers each. For convenience and order, the names of nine passengers were placed on a card which bore on it number *one*, indicating that these nine passengers were to depend on coach No. 1, to convey their persons and their luggage to the next boat. And so on until all the passengers were provided for. Thus provided, the passengers were landed in the dark; and then followed a scene of Babel-like confusion, that beggars description One or two persons stepped off the pier into the river, but were fortunately rescued; the passengers soon began to call out lustily for their several *numbers*, and while, perhaps, fifty voices at once called out all the numbers from one to fourteen, all the coachmen at once loudly responded "Here," and so left the parties precisely as much in uncertainty as they were before. After a long time, matters were brought to an adjustment, and the cavalcade advanced in the order of their numbers, at the pace of a heavily laden road team. In this way they proceeded, until they reached the half-way house. Here the horses were watered, and the drivers liberally *whiskeyed*. The 'spur in the head' soon began to operate, and matters underwent a sudden change. Whips began to snap, horses to prance, and coaches to move with life. No. 2

passed No. 1 under the lash, and Nos. 3 and 4 engaged in a sharp contest, until finally the horses of No. 4, breaking into a by-road, carried driver and passengers into an open field, and upset the coach injuring several passengers. After this manner the residue of the way was passed over.

It must be recollected, that some months before this time the justly celebrated Mr. Summerfield had returned from Europe, and was occupying a large space in the public mind. No man, probably, until Mr. Bascom commenced his career in Baltimore, had ever commanded such audiences, or received so much attention in that city, as Mr. Summerfield. The latter had, for some months, been spending his time and labors chiefly in Philadelphia, and, as we have seen, during the same period, Mr. Bascom had spent his time chiefly about Baltimore. Now it happened, almost as matter of course, that the public mind got up a sort of rivalry between these two great men, very much against their wishes. It was very common to hear a Baltimorean say that Bascom was the greater preacher, and as common to hear a Philadelphian give the like pre-eminence to Summerfield. This was, indeed, in Mr. Bascom's mind, a serious objection to visiting Philadelphia. He was exceedingly anxious to hear a preacher of such wonderful celebrity as young Summerfield, and Summerfield was equally anxious to hear a young preacher from

the western forests, whose fame had spread all over the land; and yet, the idea of being placed before the public in the attitude of rival competitors for popular applause, was utterly revolting to the feelings of both; for they felt conscious of being governed by higher and holier motives, and that they were contending for a nobler prize than the fickle meed of human applause.

Mr. Summerfield heard that Mr. Bascom was intending to visit Philadelphia, at the same time he had an agreement to visit the interior of Pennsylvania, but so desirous was he to hear the western orator, that he took from his friends a promise to give him the earliest possible information of Mr. Bascom's arrival. Before reaching Philadelphia, so fearful was Mr. Bascom of being left alone among strangers, that he insisted on an agreement with his traveling companion, that the latter should not consent to accept any appointment that might prevent him from being present whenever Bascom had to preach; but this league was soon dissolved by the arrangements of the stationed preachers of the city. His first efforts in the city made a fine impression, though, as the writer had not the privilege of hearing him, and had to depend on the reports of those who had never heard him before, he could not well determine how he would compare with himself.

A few days after reaching the city, Mr. Sum-

merfield arrived, and the writer had the pleasure of being present at the first interview between these two intellectual princes. On the following Sabbath morning, Mr. Bascom preached at the Ebenezer church, an eloquent and effective sermon, and Mr. Summerfield was one of his auditors. At the dinner table a lady said to Mr. Summerfield, "We have been hearing the western orator this morning; this afternoon we shall have the pleasure of hearing the young English orator" — alluding to himself. "My dear madam," said he, "it will be but too much like turning from the rich notes of the German flute to hear the music of a penny-whistle."

The same afternoon Mr. Summerfield preached at the Union church, — then commonly called the Academy, and Mr. Bascom was his hearer for the first time. His text was — "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," &c. His sermon was delivered in his own peculiar gentle winning style; and when he came to speak of the *faithfulness* and *justice* of God, — the very attributes which might cause the sinner to tremble with terror, — as being enlisted on the side of the contrite, and pledged to the salvation of the penitent, oh, how richly, how sweetly he unfolded the benefits of redemption by Christ Jesus. All were affected and delighted, and few or none more so than Bascom.

We give a notice of the services of this day, which appeared in one of the principal city papers on the day following:

"Among the strangers at present on a visit to our city, is Rev. Mr. Bascom, chaplain to the United States House of Representatives during its late session, a gentleman who disputes the palm of oratory in the Methodist Church with Mr. Summerfield, — if it be lawful to use such language in reference to men whose only rivalry is who shall do the most good. In a sermon delivered on Thursday evening, Mr. Bascom did not equal the expectations of the public; but in a sermon delivered yesterday morning in the church in Southwark, he surpassed them. All who heard him, pronounced his discourse truly *sublime*.

"In the afternoon Mr. Summerfield preached to a very crowded congregation, of the first respectability, in the church on Fourth street above Market. Hundreds were unable to obtain admittance, and Mr. Summerfield was, as usual, obliged to enter through a back window. From a gentleman who has heard him frequently, we learn that he yesterday afternoon delivered one of his plain, practical discourses. The most fastidious critic could find no fault with it. But it did not abound in those flights of oratory with which he sometimes delights and astonishes his auditors."

The question has often been put, which of these

two mental giants was the greater man, orator and preacher? This question is not easily answered; for their characteristic points were so very different, so opposite, that it is impossible to institute a successful comparison. All was contrast, yet each excelled the other immeasurably in his own peculiar orbit. The one was the tornado, the other the soft zephyr: the one was the mountain torrent, leaping from cliff to cliff, and plunging from rock to chasm: the other, the gently murmuring rill, flowing musically on its pebbly channel amidst verdant herbage and fragrant flowers: the one was the storm cloud, awing the beholder by its sublimity; the other, the sunlit cloud of evening, attracting by its beauty and loveliness.

The next day a number of ministers were invited to dine together at the house of Mr. Cook. Among the guests on that occasion were Rev. Ezekiel Cooper, the veteran pioneer, Rev. L. McCombs, Rev. James Smith, B., Rev. John Summerfield, and Rev. H. B. Bascom. Where are they now? Guests and entertainer all, all gone to the spirit-land to enjoy their everlasting reward.

At this social meeting an unpleasant incident occurred. Mr. Summerfield was speaking of long sermons, and, without considering the possible application of the remark, observed that Dr. Clarke was said to have expressed the opinion

that no man could preach good sense for more than an hour at one time. His manner might seem to give sanction to the sentiment, and was so understood by some of the party; and as Bascom and one or two other ministers present had preached more than an hour on the day before, the remark was felt and applied in a painful and personal manner. Bascom and Smith soon afterwards excused themselves, and withdrew from the company with feelings not the most pleasant. At a subsequent period, however, a full explanation took place, and Bascom and Summerfield were ardent friends ever after until the death of the latter.

Before Bascom had been two weeks in Philadelphia, a messenger was sent up from the eastern shore of Maryland, with directions not to return until he should bring Mr. Bascom down with him. He succeeded in his object; Mr. Bascom again visited the peninsula, and after remaining until November, he returned to Baltimore.

Letters, messages, and messengers poured in on him from all directions, earnestly soliciting him to visit and preach at various points; and so far as his health would permit, he complied with those pressing invitations. This state of incessant labor and excitement had the effect greatly to impair his physical powers; still, no sooner did he recover sufficiently from one attack, than he

again took the field, with almost a certainty of being prostrated by the effort. In this manner he spent the winter of 1824 – 25; but we cannot follow him in all his labors and travels.

Mr. Bascom, as has been noticed, witnessed the grand *entreé* of Lafayette at Baltimore in September, and was one of the committee of reception; that distinguished guest was now about to be received at Annapolis — the civil metropolis of the state of Maryland — and Bascom was invited to be present, and take part in the ceremonies. Several circumstances tended to invest the event with peculiar interest. The reception of the brave old Marquis by the military and the populace, by the House of Representatives, and by the governor and council of state, was imposing and interesting, but his reception in the senate chamber was affecting, and to no one more so than the venerable Marquis himself. The Congress of the United States met at that place in 1783, and on the 23d of December of that year General Washington there resigned his commission as commander in chief of the American army. This fact did not escape the memory of Lafayette, who was sensibly affected by the recollection; and the more so, as it was now within four days of the same time in December, at which time that event occurred. "I am happy," said he in substance, "in having the privilege of meeting you, my friends, in this sacred

place, for it was in this chamber that my great father-in-arms resigned his sword to the American Congress, after having achieved a nation's redemption—thereby rendering this place sacred through all time while one brick of this venerable edifice shall continue to lie upon another. And now, after a lapse of forty-one years, I am permitted to return here and witness the wonderful results of his patriotic labors."

On the following day, Lafayette reviewed the troops assembled on the occasion. For this purpose, an elegantly decorated pavilion was erected on a common, lying between the old college and a cove of the bay, or, as it is improperly called, *river*, which common had formed the military encampment of a part of the French soldiers whom Lafayette had brought over to aid in our struggle for independence; and here was the burying-ground, beneath whose mould reposed the dust of many a gallant Frenchman, who, at the call of Lafayette, had come to peril and lose life in the cause of American liberty. This burial place now lay out an open common, and over the undistinguishable graves of those brave-hearted Frenchmen, now tramped thousands of gayly equipped soldiers, assembled, not for fierce conflict, but for military display, before him who had lead the sleeping soldiers beneath their feet to our shores.

During the review, a little incident occurred, which began in alarm but ended in mirth. As an officer was riding near the pavilion, mounted on a high mettled and fiery horse, the wind, which was very high, detached from the pavilion a piece of red festooning, some five or six yards in length, and carried it through the air until it came in contact with the flowing tail of the fiery steed, around which it wrapped itself. The horse, frightened by this new appendage, plunged away fearfully, and run at his utmost speed, directly towards the cove near by, the red streamer flying at full length behind in the air. At length, it became detached; and the moment it was seen that danger was over, the collected thousands broke into one grand burst of laughter at the ludicrous exhibition, and the old Marquis shook his very sides with mirthful excitement.

The day following was the Sabbath. Mr. Bascom was called on to preach. The Marquis and suit, with a multitude of the *magnates* of the day, were in attendance. Regarding this as a fit occasion for asserting the high claims of Christianity on all, as well the great as the lowly, he read for his text, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation." His manner was as bold and lofty as the noble declaration which formed his theme. His arguments in defence of Christ's religion were

clear, convincing, and riveted firmly on the understanding of the hearer; his rebukes of infidelity just, severe, withering; his illustration of the saving power of the gospel, heart-stirring, grand, and overpowering. The stout hearted, the veteran sinner, and men in high places, who were not wont to make concessions to the claims of the gospel, were subdued and melted to penitence by his burning words.

The following notice of this sermon we copy from a newspaper:

"The subject selected by Mr. B. is a beautiful one. The declaration of the Apostle of the Gentiles — 'For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ' — has afforded a theme for hundreds of pulpit orators before him. We have heard sundry divines deduce from these words the common Christian duty of acknowledging the Christian religion with boldness, and of giving to it, the advocacy of their precept and example, and we have often heard, under authority of the same words, ample denunciations of those who are ashamed of the humble and self-denying doctrines inculcated by the Founder of that religion. All this is very necessary, by way of warning to unbelievers, and of moment to the doubting Christian. But Mr. B. did not content himself with these matters. He treated the Christian religion as a divine institution, and with

the bold hand of a master, demonstrated its truths from its history and its intrinsic philosophy. Verily, he did this well.

"In contrasting the Christian religion with other religions of the world, he represented *them* as being planted by the hand of power and connected with the fortunes of dynasties, and, of course, carrying upon their creeds unphilosophical dogmas, having their origin in the imaginations, or the interests of their founders, the absurdities of which must produce skepticism in the enlightened mind, and can only be successfully addressed to the credulity of the ignorant. Hence he inferred, that the thrones and the priesthoods of the world have conspired to keep man ignorant, by repressing the curiosity which would lead him to reasoning, the result of which would be his mental and political emancipation. The Christian religion, he said, was a seedling, planted in an uncongenial soil. As it grew, the chilling storms and winds of the north, the burning sun and withering siroccos of the south, had conspired to check its growth. The beasts of the forest cropped its foliage, and the wild boar whetted his tusks upon its trunk. Nevertheless, by virtue of its strength and self-reproducing power, its roots had sunk deep in the earth, and its branches towered aloft, and spread far and wide.

"In demonstrating the truth of the Christian

religion from the adaptation of its history, and that of its Master to the sympathies, passions, and frailties of human nature, he was particularly successful. In this, he founded the philosophy of the 'Gospel of Christ.' The writer of this article never before heard this powerful argument wielded as its importance deserves by a pulpit orator, except once. Verily, the writer of this article would ride (yes, or walk, either) many miles to hear Mr. Bascom again draw around his argument the illustrative energy which the poetry of his subject affords. This is his forte. He not only convinces, but he captivates. In this he differs from most of those who occupy the sacred desk. They would, generally, seem studiously to avoid the ideality of the wonderful subject, which is the theme of their addresses. They approach its awful and beautiful sublimities—ideas struggle for utterance, and words tremble upon their lips, which, if uttered, *would* commend religion to reason and taste — they falter, hesitate, and grope their way back again within the measured landmarks of a creed."

The sermon drew from the Marquis, as well as from many other persons, high commendation.

During this winter Mr. Bascom made a preaching tour through a portion of Pennsylvania, visiting York, Gettysburg, Chambersburgh, Carlisle, Harrisburg, and other places, and preaching at all.

While on this tour the following notice of his pulpit labors appeared in a Pennsylvania paper:—

"He commenced preaching at eleven o'clock, and did not conclude till fifteen minutes after one. During all this time, the utmost silence prevailed; for it was a suitable and pathetic sermon, delivered in the most feeling and touching manner, to prepare the minds of the congregation for the solemn act which they were just going to perform — the partaking of the Lord's Supper. He took his text from the last chapter of St. Luke, forty-sixth and forty-seventh verses; and, throughout the whole discussion, he evinced a thorough knowledge of the sacred scriptures; an intimate acquaintance with the classics; a familiarity with the arts and sciences; with law and government; and with natural and moral philosophy.

"The laws of the Great Ruler of the universe, and the laws of human invention belonging to the different nations, which he adverted to with so much facility as evidence to prove the position he had taken, of the '*vicarious office of Christ*,' as applicable and necessary to man's salvation *here*, and glory *hereafter*, were the strongest arguments on this point that we have ever heard, adduced: *they* prove, moreover, that HE is an able and zealous champion of the gospel ministry.

In the evening the church was still more crowded than it was during the day. He preached from St.

Matthew's gospel, eleventh chapter, and part of the nineteenth verse. An equal display of eloquence, pathos, and volubility were exhibited, as in the morning; although, previous to his commencing, he apologized to his hearers for the want of strength, in consequence of the numerous calls he was obliged (from courtesy) to accept and fulfill.

"Notwithstanding all the advantages possessed by Mr. Bascom, calculated to attract the vulgar, to fascinate the well disposed, to entertain the scholar, to awaken the wicked, and to gladden the heart of the Christian; yet there is *something* wanting to make him a *good* orator, according to the doctrines and lectures of Blair and others. He wants *method;* for, sometimes, we observe too much *formality*, and at others too much *fire*. We frequently lose the sense and meaning of his arguments, in consequence of the *fleetness* of his ideas, which rush upon him with impetuosity. But this *defect* can be obviated through time, and no doubt will be obviated; for it is a defect of such magnitude, and it detracts so much from the character of an *accomplished orator*, that every art should be employed to cure it. It is more than probable, however, that his *zeal*, not his want of judgment, leads him into this error. Upon the whole, he is a powerful preacher, a highly gifted man, and calculated to do much good. That he may continue to benefit the people by his exertions, and

grow in knowledge and truth, is the sincere wish of the writer."

While in Harrisburg — the seat of the state government — the *Visitor* published the following article:

"REV. MR. BASCOM. — This extraordinary orator has paid us a visit, and preached three times to crowded houses. The following just tribute we cheerfully copy from the Democratic Press. The writer says: 'I have no disposition to dishonor the pulpit, by lavishing adulation upon its friends and advocates. The pulpit is sacred — it is the store-house from which is broken the bread of life, and with humility and great deference to its corner stone, I would submit a few remarks upon one of its faithful stewards — I mean the Rev. Mr. Bascom. If we may judge from this man's powers of mind, from his devotion to the cause of his Master, and from his captivating manner, he gladly dispenses the word of truth; we think him worthy of the high vocation to which he professes to have been called. Such are the prodigious stores of intellectual wealth with which he is endowed, that he enriches every part of his subject, and upon dry and barren topics, he engrafts variety and rich abundance. Fired by the heroism of the Christian warfare, he draws and fastens the careless to the great subject of the Bible; inflexibly fixed to the standard of the

cross, he confirms the wavering and strengthens the weak; and to complete the impression, and to give the effect to his labor, he sallies in whirlwinds of eloquence, and quivers in terrible lustre along the historic page of the Christian church.

"The whole range of theology, (the hill of Calvary excepted,) affords nothing more sublime, more awfully grand, than the view taken by this man on Sunday 13th, of these words, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' This discourse possessed something loftier than usual; connected with this sublime subject, it seemed to stretch beyond the human horizon; it was a seat that translates man to the abode of angels."

"On Sunday last, he delivered a lecture upon the second Psalm, which was one of the most sublime, bold and grand views, perhaps, ever taken of this interesting part of scripture. Betimes his subject appeared to be exhausted; then, pausing for a moment, as if waiting to see whether every one was not convinced of what he had been saying — new views, and new imaginations would flash upon his mind, when he would soar again, and paint in the most glowing colors the goodness of God, and the justness of his severity"

At that place, the fire of his eloquence appears to have awakened the spirit of poesy in the breast

of a lady. She was asked whether she preferred to be fanned by the gentle *breezes* of Summerfield's *oratory*, or *wafted* by the whirlwinds of Bascom's *eloquence*, and below is her answer:

I love the sighing of the gentle breeze,
As soft it sweeps along the greenwood trees,
I love to feel its sweet refreshing power,
Reanimate my languid frame, and thus new life restore.
But, oh! I love still more the powerful gale,
That scales the mountain as it leaves the vale,
Sublimely rising — see! it whirls, it flies!
Before it, every noxious vapor dies:
Its purifying influence now I prove,
And breathe on earth the atmosphere above;
Renewed, invigorated, still I rise,
Leave earth behind, and soar above the skies.

S N

Harrisburg, Pa., February 9th, 1825.

CHAPTER XIV

Mr. Bascom finishes his Pennsylvania Tour — Returns to Baltimore, and in March goes to his station in Pittsburg — Is cordially received — Complimentary Newspaper notice — Unitarian Reply to that Notice — His Habit of Visiting the Sick — An Instance of it — Notice of his Preaching in Brownsville — At the Conference of 1825 appointed Conference Missionary — Object of that Appointment — Incidents showing the Strength of his Friendship.

It will be recollected that Mr. Bascom went to Washington in fulfillment of his appointment to the chaplaincy to Congress in December; during his sojourn in the east more than fourteen months had elapsed. Of course the term of service for which he had been appointed to Steubenville in September, 1823, had expired some six months prior to the date of which we now speak, and he had been appointed to the city of Pittsburg. After finishing his Pennsylvania tour, he returned to Baltimore, arranged his affairs, and early in March, 1825, took his departure for Pittsburg.

The people among whom he had been appointed to labor, had been anxiously expecting his arrival for several months, and when he at last came, they greeted him with a most cordial welcome.

Soon after his arrival in Pittsburg, an article appeared in a Presbyterian periodical, a copy of which is given below:

"MR. BASCOM. — The writer of this article is adverse from panegyric, except when the cause of religion, or some great public interest, is obviously benefited, and improved by the exertion of superior talents, and a laudable zeal to promulgate and enforce important religious truths. The Rev. gentleman whose name heads this communication, is recently from Baltimore. In that city, he commanded the attention and admiration of Christians of every denomination, and frequently drew forth, through the medium of the weekly journals, the unqualified approbation of the literati. It is a fact, that the labors of Mr. Bascom in Baltimore, have been signally blessed as a means of pulling down one of the strong holds of the enemy. In consequence of the successful exertion of the energies of his mind, and the irresistible cogency of his arguments, aimed at the subversion of Socinian tenets, the Unitarian church in that city has been dissolved; the press devoted to its interests, has been discontinued, and the minister under whose incumbency the church was established, has withdrawn from his charge. All this is unequivocally attributed to the exertions and pious energies of the Rev. Henry Bascom. Since he commenced his labors in this city, his ministrations have been well attended, and, I believe, well received: but his discourse last Sabath evening crowned all his efforts in this section of Christendom. It was

preached at the request of the 'Female Benevolent Society' of this city; and was a powerful, and an overwhelming appeal to the reason and feelings of a crowded audience. He selected for his subject the propagation of the gospel among the heathen; and I am bold to say, the cause of missions was never espoused by an abler advocate. One of the subdivisons of his discourse was, that the 'propagation of the gospel among the heathen, was to be effected by *means*, not by *miracles*.' On this part of his subject, he enforced the truth he was defending with a richness of illustration, a validity of argument, and, at the same time, with a force of eloquence, that simultaneously convinced, captivated, and astonished. The writer has been informed, that Mr. Bascom intends, at no distant period, to attack, in a few formal discourses, the Socinian creed: if so, it is to be hoped, that the Unitarians of the vicinity will constitute a portion of his hearers."

That part of this article which speaks of the discomfiture of Unitarianism in Baltimore through the instrumentality of Mr. Bascom's labors, produced some excitement on the Unitarian side, and an attempt to turn the point of this humiliating statement. To be sure the respondent on that side admitted the facts of the dispersion of the church, the discontinuance of their periodical, and the withdrawal of the pastor from the congregation, but

denied that these effects were dependent on the preaching of Mr. Bascom as their cause.

His term of service in Pittsburgh was short; half the year had passed away before he reached his station, and nothing is recollected of special interest in his ministry previous to the next conference. I take this occasion to speak of one trait in Bascom's character which has not generally been well understood. Many suppose that he was a mere pulpit man, and that the details of other pastoral duty were almost wholly neglected by him.

This is a total mistake, and especially as it respects the duty of visiting the sick; for I have seldom found a man who enjoyed so much pleasure in visiting, comforting, and nursing the sick.

A member of his charge in Pittsburg was sick of a fatal, but chronic disease; Bascom visited him as pastor and friend until his death. Sometime after the man's death, his family enquired of Bascom if he knew how often he had visited him, and on answering in the negative, he was informed of the number of his visits, and I am quite certain it exceeded fifty — I think fifty-eight.

In the early part of his ministry he kept a regular list of the sick of his charge, and noted all his visits to them. Such a list I find for his first circuit, from which it may be known who were sick and how often and when he visited each.

About the close of this conference year we find

him preaching at Brownsville, Pa., when the following report is given by the "American Observer" of that place, under date of September, 1825.

"He selected for his text the sixth and seventh verses, of the ninth chapter of Isaiah: 'For unto us a child is born,' &c., and oh, if ever the divinity of our Saviour was portrayed in colors the most striking, it was then. He touched every chord with a master hand. If the tincture of his pencil was brilliant and pleasing, the force of his argument was irresistible. If his colors were glowing, the thunders of his eloquence were astounding; or if the ear was delighted, the heart was softened and subdued. From the very zenith of divinity and the congregation of saints, he would plunge directly into the very abyss of eternal perdition, and depict the infernal spirits of everlasting damnation. He would in a moment soar to the pinnacle of sublimity, and descend into the depths of hell. He would heighten the imagination, and storm the passions in a trice. He slew Deism, as with the two-edged sword. Unitarianism sunk as by magic before him, and the religion of Christ alone bore sway. He extended its blessings to all quarters of the globe. He unfolded its benefits to all. The wilds of our own country, had already experienced its beneficial results — it was proclaimed on the Andes, and in Thermopylæ, on the banks of the Ganges and the Nile; and the day advancing

when Italy would resound with the gospel, and the temples of old Jerusalem become vocal with its praise. '*With judgment and with justice, from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this.*'

"The length of his discourse was one hour and fifty minutes, which to his admiring audience seemed scarce an hour. The congregation was said to consist of at least three thousand persons, of whom none was displeased, but on the contrary inexpressibly delighted, with the graceful and pleasing mode of his delivery, the inexhaustible fund of knowledge, moral and political, he appeared to possess, and his fervent devotion to the cause he has espoused. He sat down quite exhausted, amid the astonishment and most lively sensations of the congregation, it being, as we are informed, the seventh sermon he had preached in little more than a week."

At the conference held this autumn, he was appointed conference missionary—an appointment which I suppose was designed chiefly to afford him an opportunity to travel at large, in compliance with the numerous pressing calls made upon him from all quarters, and more especially from the eastern cities. He did not, however, cross the mountains until the spring or summer of 1826, but spent the winter about Pittsburg and the neighboring regions.

In December of this year, (1825,) an incident occurred, which, as it gives another exemplification of his devotion to his friends, may be worth relating.

We have seen before, that Mr. Bascom's kind attention to his sick friend in Washington was the incidental cause of his remaining on the Atlantic coast nine or ten months longer than he would otherwise have done, and so, greatly enlarging his circle of acquaintance, and his reputation as a popular preacher: on learning that that friend would come to the west in that month, Bascom, to ensure a meeting with him, wrote to persons at Uniontown, Brownsville and Washington, Pa., to detain him until he (Bascom) could get notice and meet him. At the latter place his friend was detained, and a letter despatched to him at Pittsburg, and the following evening Bascom was on the ground. Not satisfied with the conversation of one day, he went with his friend to Wheeling, Va., and there detained him an entire week. At another time, two years later, he challenged his friend to a meeting on middle ground — the parties being separated by a distance of more than two hundred and fifty miles — the challenge was accepted, and a pleasant week spent together. Such was the character of Henry Bascom's friendship. What Phillips says of Napoleon was more true of Bascom — "He never forsook a friend, nor forgot a favor."

After traveling somewhat extensively through the west, he went eastward in the spring or summer of 1826, and after visiting most of the cities and towns where he had preached in 1824–5, he extended his tour farther northward, and for the first time visited the city of New York. Here he was not only received with enthusiasm, but, if we may rely on the concurrent testimony of the press, of letter writers, and of hearers generally, was remarkably successful; and so thought he himself. He seldom spake of his sermons, and especially not in commendation of them, or to elicit the commendation of others, even to his confidential friends; but on this occasion, he said more than I ever knew him to say on any other. He had preached six sermons; and at the close of his labor, he writes, "I have preached six times in the city, and I doubt if I have ever before been equally successful in any six successive sermons." This, to be sure, was only "comparing himself with himself," but this was going farther than he was accustomed to go.

Having completed his tour, he returned to the west, and at the conference of September, 1826, was appointed to Uniontown, a small town at the western base of the great Appalachian chain of mountains. Such a place might well seem a "pent up Utica for his great powers," but it must be understood that there was an ulterior object in

view. The Pittsburg conference had resolved on the establishment of a college, and Uniontown had been selected as the place of its location. A committee had been charged with this important business, and Mr. Bascom was at the head of that committee.

To build up this institution of learning, Bascom went to work with the zeal and energy with which he prosecuted every enterprise in which he embarked. During the winter, a liberal charter was granted, under the name of Madison College, funds were raised, general preparations made, and in the following June (1827) the trustees met and regularly organized the college, by the appointment of Mr. Bascom President, with five other professors and tutors, among whom were Rev. Dr. C. Elliott and the late Mr. Fielding.

With the presidency was connected the chair of moral science comprehensively; but in the infancy of the college, there were no classes sufficiently advanced to receive the instructions of that chair, and Mr. Bascom, therefore, devoted his labors chiefly to the general advancement of the interests of the institution by every means in his power, by procuring students, raising funds, and devising plans for its improvement.

On his formal installation into office as President, Mr. Bascom delivered an inaugural address, which was highly commended by the papers of the day,

and from which, as it was his first *published* discourse, we take a few extracts for the reader's gratification:

"Man is, perhaps, the most singularly constituted being, in the high scale of heaven's mysterious workmanship; and if we except the heavenly intelligencies, he stands pre-eminent among all the works of God. Uniting in himself a thousand modifications of matter, and the endless varieties of mind, by his material part, connected with things terrestrial; by the immaterial, claiming alliance with a higher and nobler world above; mortal and immortal in his complex nature; tending to the tomb, and yet superior to its ravages; ever converging to corruption, and the darkness of the grave, and yet conscious of undying energies within; he presents us with a problem in the science of being, the solution of which can be realized only in a direct communication from the Creator to the creature — of whose mysterious formation and attributes we are now speaking. Man seems to unite in himself the diversities of created nature, and stand forth, not unaptly, to the contemplation of intelligence, as an epitome of being; an abridgment of the universe! Of the primitive condition and ultimate destination of man, it cannot be necessary for us to speak at length here. Nature, tradition, and inspiration, unite in their testimony, that he left

the hand of the Creator, combining in himself the elements of an existence, splendid in its structure, and boundless in prospect."

* * * * * * *

"As a solitary or a social being, man must be partially wretched, if devoid of proper instruction; but if possessed of the advantages of education, nothing but an evil, an upbraiding conscience, can make him miserable. In the city or the desert; in a palace, or a cottage; in robes, or in rags; standing on land, or rolling on the ocean; buried amid the snows of Iceland, or burning beneath the fervors of the torrid zone; he has resources of which he can be deprived only by the Power that conferred them. Beggared by misfortune; exiled by friends; abjured by society, and deprived of its solace, the interior of the intellectual structure, continues unaffected and underanged amid the accumulating wretchedness without; and the temple of the soul is still sacred to the cherished recollections of 'Nature and Nature's God.'"

* * * * * * *

"Let memory, for a moment, sketch the desolate map of Greece: Where now are the walks of Genius, and the retreats of the Muses, upon the banks of the Illisus, and the Argora of Athens? Where is the Grove of Plato, the Lyceum of Aristotle, and the Porch of Zeno? We have to repeat, alas! Greece is no longer the theatre of

learning, and Athens is endeared to us only as the *alma mater* of the literary world!"

"Visit the classic but profaned ruins of Athens and Rome, and ask the genius of the place, or the page of history, where is the freedom immortalized by the Philippics of Demosthenes, and the orations of Cicero? And the one and the other will answer, knowledge departed, and liberty was exiled! Polished Greece, therefore, and imperial Rome owed their distinction to letters. And what is it knowledge cannot achieve? It has transformed the ocean into the highway of nations. Steam, fire, wind, and wave, all minister to the comforts and elegancies of life. The cold and insensible marble speaks and breathes. The pencil of Raphael gives body and soul to color, light, and shade. The magnet, the mysterious polarity of the loadstone, conducts man over the bosom of the deep to the islands of the sea; while the glass introduces him to the heavens, and kindles his devotion amid the grandeur of a thousand worlds!"

* * * * * * * *

"The exceptionable parts of the works of these celebrated models of taste and composition, (particularly Greek and Latin authors,) will be carefully excluded; but you will find much to admire, and much that is worthy of imitation. Even here, you may wander with Homer upon the banks of the

Simois and the Scamander. You may gaze on the beautiful Helen, and the enraged Achilles. The chiefs of Greece and Troy, will engage in mortal combat before you; and you will dissolve in tears at the meeting of Hector and Andromache. Herodotus will introduce to you the millions of barbarians following the standard of Xerxes. The brave Leonidas, and his Spartan band, will dispute the passage of Thermopylæ before your eyes. Victory will disgrace Persia, and defeat bring glory to Greece! Horace and Virgil will introduce you to the palatine and capitolium of Rome; they will conduct you along the banks of the Po, adorned on either side by the meadows of Mantua; and you shall regale and delight yourselves amid the enchanting groves of Umbria. Go on, then, young gentlemen, and seek a deserved and well merited celebrity; and if you cannot reach the summit of Parnassus, linger at its foot, and imbibe the streams of knowledge and science as they gurgle by."

* * * * * * * *

"We feel a daring consciousness — an almost prophetic persuasion, that should we add to an indulgence in the lofty aims of an imperishable ambition, coresponding vigor and skill of effort, this country is destined, at no distant period, to rise and take its stand among the lettered nations of the old world. Religion and science are already

taught in one hundred and forty different dialects: hand in hand, united in immortal wedlock, they are every where extending their empire, and multiplying their votaries. The *collective* mind of universal man, seems to have caught the "classic contagion," and it is diffusing itself, with epidemic energy, over sea and land. We are aware, however, that the progress of knowledge will be opposed. Ignorance, tyranny, and tyrants, have always been opposed to light and knowledge: and as Caligula wished to destroy the works of Homer, Livy, and Virgil, so have these, whether in church or in state, aimed at the defeat of every essay, calculated to inspire a love for liberty, equality, and virtue. It is, indeed, to be regretted, that even in this age of moral illumination and virtuous chivalry, there are the incurious and the careless, who take no interest in the improvement and march of mind — and whose only pleasure appears to be derived from an ignorance of duty. Swayed in the lower ranks of society, by a love of things present, and in the higher, by the *mania* of property, if they can only 'eat, drink, and be merry' — if they can hoard wealth, count the miser's gains, and revel in luxury, it is all they care for. These haters of knowledge — these contemners of wisdom — these drudges of avarice and cupidity, at once the curse and the nuisance of society, could have seen at Alexandria and at Rome, without emotion

or a tear, the long regretted monuments of genius and glory perish in the flames. 'Away with your learning,' is an argument with which we are met on every side. And this language of Mecca, this motto of the Vatican, comes from an American, a Christian, the father of a group of children flanking his door-yard."

Mr. Bascom applied himself assiduously to the object of procuring legislative aid for Madison College. He wrote to and conversed with members of the Legislature, and other influential men, earnestly urging the claims of the infant college on the bounty of the state treasury; and he finally succeeded, if I mistake not, to the amount of ten thousand dollars.

Another favorite project with him was the establishment of a professorship of agricultural science and practice in the college.

Mr. Bascom's original correspondence on this subject, with the most distinguished men of the nation at that time, is in my possession, and as some of the suggestions of these eminent men may be regarded as valuable, and as they are every one now gone from among us, I have concluded to incorporate these letters into this work.

His Excellency, JAMES MADISON, *Ex-President of the U. S.*

MY DEAR SIR: — In the name, and by order of the Board of Trustees of "Madison College," recently established in this borough, I am instructed to say, that in consideration of your distinguished public and private worth, as a citizen of the United

States, they have taken the liberty, without consulting you, of calling this Institution by your name. I am directed to tender you the high consideration of the Board; and beg you to accept from me, individually, assurances of my perfect esteem.

Very respectfully,

H. B. BASCOM.

Uniontown, Pa., March 13, 1827.

I have received, sir, your letter of the 19th instant, saying that the trustees of the college recently established in Uniontown, have been pleased to call it by my name. Regarding every new institution for the wholesome instruction of youth, as a gain to the cause of national improvement, and to the stability and prosperity of our free system of government, I feel that my name is greatly honored by such an association as has been made of it. Be so obliging, sir, as to express for me the acknowledgments I owe to the Trustees, with my best wishes, that they may receive for their fostering care of the infant college, the reward most grateful to them, in its rapid growth and extensive usefulness. I offer you, at the same time, assurances of my particular consideration and respect.

JAMES MADISON.

Montpelier, March 27, 1827.

UNIONTOWN, June 26, 1827.

MR. MADISON,

Dear Sir,— Accompanying this letter, I send you a copy of the charter of Madison College. By reference to the ninth article, you will perceive that it is the intention of the trustees to have attached to the Institution an agricultural department, in which all the various arts and uses of this important branch of human industry shall be taught upon scientific principles, and reduced to practice in the grounds and gardens attached to the College for that purpose. As this is rather an experiment in the literary world, especially in this country, I shall feel myself greatly obliged, should you be so good as to furnish me with your views upon this subject. Madison College is yet in its infancy, but, from a calculation of probabilities, it is likely to do well

Accept my thanks for your former letter; and permit me to renew assurances of my perfect esteem.

Very respectfully,

H. B. BASCOM.

MONTPELIER, July 21, 1827.

DEAR SIR, — Your favor of June 26, enclosing a copy of the Charter of the College, having arrived during an absence from which I am just returned, I could no sooner acknowledge it. It gives me pleasure to find that the Trustees are about to attach to the Institution, an agricultural department, an improvement well meriting a place among the practical ones which the lights of the age, and the genius of our country, are adding to the ordinary course of public instructton.

I wish I could give value to my commendation, by pointing out the best mode of adapting the experiment to its useful object. The task, I doubt not, will be well performed by the intelligent councils charged with the Institution, aided, as they will be, by the better models of rural economy in your state than are presented in this.

The views of this subject which occurred in the agricultural society in the neighborhood of our University, will be seen in a printed circular, of which I enclose a copy; and with it, an address to the society, which will show that our agricultural practice is as much behind that of your state, as the latter can be short of the attainable standard. Perhaps the celebrated establishment of Fellenberg, in Switzerland, may give useful hints in combining agricultural with academic instruction, and both with the advantages of an experimental and pattern farm.

Repeating my wishes for the prosperity and usefulness of the nascent seminary, I tender you my respectful and friendly salutations.

JAMES MADISON.

MADISON COLLEGE, Oct. 19, 1827.

MR. MADISON,

My Dear Sir, — I have the pleasure of informing you that our infant College is in successful operation, with six teachers, actively

employed every day. Our prospects, at present, afford considerable promise, and allow us to hope much, in behalf of the institution.

The seal of the College is simple and unpretending; a small *vignette* engraving of the head of Mr. Madison, with this designation, "Madisoniensis collegii sigillum, 1827," in Roman numerals.

We shall proceed slowly, but we hope to do it safely. Our first maxim is not to go in debt; if we do but little, we intend to do it honestly, and do it well.

I am now constantly employed in the collection of books, maps, charts and moneys, for the institution. At present we have sixty-three scholars, and about twenty more engaged to enter shortly.

What we most need in the present state of our progress, are a library, and the necessary apparatus for a college. The agricultural department excites considerable interest in different sections of the country. We shall be thankful for your paternal advice at any time. Very respectfully,

H. B. Bascom.

Montpelier, November 10, 1827.

Dear Sir, — Your letter of October 19, was received in due time. The acknowledgement of it has been delayed by a wish to accompany it with a copy, as requested, of the enactments of our university, which I did not obtain till two days ago.

I congratulate you on the encouraging prospect which dawns on the infant establishment under your presiding care. A temporary deficiency in the articles of apparatus and library, is generally felt in learned institutions, the offspring of individual efforts, in a country not abounding in individual wealth. In our university, though now under state endowment, the library is on a scale little comporting, as yet, with that of the plan. The books are, however, systematically chosen, and form a nucleus for an excellent collection. No catalogue has been printed, or I would add a copy to that of the enactment.

I cannot too much commend the prudent rules by which it is proposed to manage the economic interests of the college. Experience shows the evil tendency of incurring debts beyond resources, in the case of public bodies, as well as of individuals.

And the Spanish adage, *festina lente*, conveys a lesson particularly applicable to the case of new undertakings, having difficulties to overcome with scantiness of means.

With great esteem and good wishes,

JAMES MADISON.

DANGHANGANE MANOR, Nov. 13, 1827.

Dear Sir, — I lately received your obliging letter of the 8th instant, and consider the Carroll Institute of Agriculture,* proposed to be established in Madison College, as a distinguished honor conferred upon me. It is indeed surprising that that college should be the first to establish a professorship for teaching and diffusing the science of agriculture, so essential to the welfare of every country, particularly to the United States. Great benefits, undoubtedly, this country will derive from the institution. That such may be reaped, that Madison College may prosper, and that the laudable example it has set, may be followed by others, are the ardent wishes of

Dear Sir, your humble servant,

CH. CARROLL, *of Carrollton.*

Mr. H. B. BASCOM.

RICHMOND, November 19, 1827.

Dear Sir, — Yesterday, on my return from North Carolina, I had the pleasure of receiving your favor of the 10th. The question you proposed is one which I am not well qualified to answer. It can scarcely be considered independently of accompanying circumstances. That agriculture is a science in which society is deeply interested, no man will deny; and that it may be greatly improved by scientific researches, will, I presume, be generally admitted. It is, however, a science in which much practice must be blended with theory, and in which theory itself varies with soil, climate, and a variety of circumstances. Much will, of course, depend on the professor, and much on the facility with which he may be enabled to make his experiments.

A student may certainly derive advantages from such a department, if well conducted, and may acquire a knowledge of prin-

*Named in honor of the venerable Ch. Carroll.

ciples that will be useful to him in after life. It seems to me to be connected with the department of chemistry, and, in some degree, with mechanics. Such a professorship may, I should think, furnish valuable information to the public.

How far it may be useful to the particular institution, may probably depend upon circumstances, among which the state of its funds ought not to be overlooked.

With great respect, I am your obedient servant,

J. MARSHALL.

Mr. H. B. BASCOM.

WASHINGTON, November 24, 1827.

My Dear Sir, — I duly received your letter of the 10th inst., in which you are pleased to ask my opinion of the utility of an agricultural professorship, which is proposed to be established in your college. I think such a professorship, properly filled, and its duties performed with zeal and industry, would be productive of much benefit; and it could be no where better situated than in the fertile regions beyond the mountains. It would be a leading object with the professor, to teach the practical application of the sciences (chemistry especially) to agriculture; and also to bring into view the most approved implements of husbandry in use in different parts of the Union, and in other countries, as well as improvements which may be made from time to time.

With my best wishes for the success of your college in all its departments, I am, truly, your friend and obedient servant,

H. CLAY.

The Rev. Mr. BASCOM.

UNIONTOWN, PA., November 19, 1827.

HIS EX. DE WITT CLINTON.

My Dear Sir, — I must beg you to excuse the liberty I take in requesting your opinion on a subject in which I feel the deepest interest; — it is, the comparative fitness and probable utility of an agricultural professorship in the colleges of this country. We are about to make the attempt to establish one in this Institution; indeed, provisionally, it already exists, and I am anxious to have your opinion in relation to a literary movement of so novel a character in the United States.

Should your views and feelings incline you to do so, it will afford me much pleasure to hear from you in reply to the suggestion above: — all which is respectfully submitted. Accept assurances of my perfect good will.

H. B. BASCOM.

ALBANY, November 24, 1827.

Sir, — I have been favored with your letter of the 9th inst. and fully sensible of the honor you have done me, in consulting me on a subject so important, I now answer it with great pleasure.

In a communication to our Legislature in 1818, I recommended the establishment of a Board of Agriculture, and added the following remarks, "And a Professorship of Agriculture attached to our Board, or connected with the University, might also be constituted, embracing the kindred sciences of Chemistry, Mineralogy, Botany, and the other departments of natural history; by which means, a complete course of agricultural education would be taught, developing the principles of the science, illustrating the practice of the arts, and restoring the first and best pursuit of man to that intellectual rank which it ought to occupy in the scale of human estimation."

My opinion on this subject remains unchanged: and as agriculture is a science as well as an art, the benefits from such an institution must be great and extensive. In Edinburg, and two or three other foreign universities, professorships of agriculture have been instituted with great advantage. The work of Sir Humphrey Davy, on chemical agriculture, evinces the close alliance between this art and the most analytical and profound investigations of science.

With my best wishes for the prosperity of the institution over which you preside, and with sentiments of high respect, I have the honor to be your most obedient servant,

DE WITT CLINTON.

PRESIDENT BASCOM.

WASHINGTON, 4th December, 1827.

Dear Sir, — Accept my thanks for your letter of the 8th ult., and for the copy of the Laws and Charter of Madison College,

forwarded with it. The institution of a professorship of agriculture at that establishment, I believe and hope, will be attended with salutary effects, and a similar professorship at other colleges in our country, would constitute an improvement of the system of education pursued in their halls. There are, I believe some academies in Europe, and in this country, where lessons of agriculture are given in connection with a farm which is cultivated by the students. These, perhaps, are the most useful institutions, as they combine the theory with the practice.

Wishing you all success at the college over which you preside, with health and prosperity, I remain respectfully yours,

J. Q. Adams.

Rev. H. B. Bascom.

Mr. Bascom labored with great zeal and perseverance to establish the college on a permanent basis, and certainly succeeded in doing much, but there were strong counteracting circumstances which stood in the way of complete success. The endowment was trifling in amount, the local patronage limited, and that from a distance still more so; of course a full faculty of instruction could not be supported adequately, and Bascom, at least, was not in a condition to labor for naught; and besides, the church controversy was just then at its height, and dissentient partizans would not harmonize in supporting an institution which each party feared might fall into the hands of the other. In this state of things, in 1829 Mr. Bascom resigned the Presidency of Madison college after having labored hard for about three years to build it up.

On the resignation of Mr. Bascom the conference adopted the following approbatory resolution:

"Resolved — That the cordial thanks of this conference be tendered to brother H. B. Bascom for his disinterested exertions in the establishment of Madison college. We sincerely regret the existence of any circumstance which may have induced him to resign his relation to it as President: we hope, however, that this resignation shall not alienate his friendly influence and interest from our infant institution.

"*True copy.* C. Cook, *Sec'y.*"

That the want of adequate compensation had much influence in superinducing Bascom's resignation is highly probable. The reader will recollect that as far back as 1814 he complained of his embarrassing debt, and that in 1816 he was fairly groaning under his burden, and mourning his inability to relieve the pressing necessities of his father and family. From that period onward, matters were every year growing worse with him, for while the old debt remained uncancelled, each succeeding year the claims on him grew larger and more pressing; his father was less and less able to help himself and family every year, his children must be educated or grow up in ignorance, and the heaviest of the whole burden rested on the shoulders of Henry. In 1825 his father writes to him: — "My corn is light: what little remained

of our wheat crop the weevils have destroyed; my potatoes are barely the seed, and poverty crowds on every side."

While at the college, in1827 the ever accumulating pressure seems to have driven him almost to despair. He writes: —

"My father is alarmingly infirm this spring — on this subject I tremble between hope and fear. I am quite fixed in my purpose to locate this fall — I am absolutely compelled to do it, and I can hesitate no longer. I do not believe it is my duty to suffer even to disgrace in order to remain in the traveling connection. My situation is getting worse every day — the interest of the money I owe exceeds my income — and my correspondence costs me one hundred and thirty dollars a year. My clothes are worn out, and I have not the means to replace them. What better can I do than retire from an unequal contest? I should like to remain in the traveling connection, but I am fatally doomed, after fourteen years of toil, like Cowper's 'stricken deer' to seek the shade and try to recover my wounds." Yet after all he never could get his consent to retire from the service of the church, but held on, and suffered, and endured until, at last, death signed his release. Oh, to see a soul of such noble mould wrestling with poverty, and crushed through its own high devotion to the cause of God, of filial piety and of general

benevolence, must at once excite sorrow, grief and admiration.

Mr. Bascom was a member of the General Conference of 1828; but such was the state of parties in the church, that he appears to have taken no active part in the deliberations of the body, though he was active in trying to bring about a reconciliation, as we shall more fully learn in another place.

During the period of his connection with Madison College, he traveled extensively, and preached, as well as labored to advance the interests of the college.

On one of these excursions, he visited some of the interior towns of Pennsylvania, and we select the following notice of his labors from a number of like kind. We quote directly from the *United States Gazette*, of Philadelphia:

"An Eloquent Preacher.—The Rev. H. B. Bascom, a preacher of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and, if we mistake not, a professor in one of the colleges of Kentucky, has, it appears from our late country papers, been preaching in the interior of this State. Mr. Bascom is, probably, one of the most eloquent men of his age. We listened to him some years ago in this city. And never listened to a public speaker with more intense interest. He is not so persuasive and winning as Summerfield used to be, and differs

very materially in his style of oratory from Mr. Maffitt, but we think him more brilliant and intellectual than either. He fascinates the mind, and delights the imagination, while Mr. Summerfield appealed to the feelings and touched the heart. Mr. Maffitt is now or was recently in this city. He still attracts numerous audiences, and is admired by thousands. He is unquestionably a fascinating and agreeable speaker, but, to our taste, is far behind Bascom. It seems that this latter gentleman recently delivered an address at the laying of a corner stone in Hollidaysburg, Pa. The editor of the Aurora, published at that place, has the following notice of it:

"'Frequently have we heard discourses, which we deemed elegant — frequently have sat and listened with admiring delight to the animated speaker or sublime orator — but never have we heard anything, in elegance of style and soundness of logic, excel, or even equal that of Bascom on the above occasion. His is the peculiar power to fascinate an audience — to charm the soul, and open anew the dried fountains of feeling in every bosom; his clear and glowing metaphors; his deep searching description, all bespeak a paragon in the wide school of impassioned oratory. Who that sits for one moment, beneath the just rebuke of Bascom, and does not feel the gnarled principles of his nature riven by the thunderbolt of his

intellectual power and the fire of his most supernatural expression, but must be steeled against all sensibility. He is emphatically 'a painter for eternity.' Although the day was highly disagreeable, there was not the least symptom of impatience manifested by the assemblage, but all was attention, every eye was riveted on the speaker — and every tongue was mute, save an occasional whisper of gratification — the deep monotony of the wind whistling through the interstices of the stand, contrasted fearfully with the distinct tone of his voice. Disappointment filled every mind, but not that disappointment which arises from heightened expectations — for our own part, we had formed an idea of his powers; we had painted them in our imagination, but our anticipations were more than realized. The description given of him by Rev. Mr. Maffitt, which was published in the first number of the Aurora, considered at that time by some as a fulsome adulation of the man, even fails to delineate his just attributes. Language is incapable of portraying his abilities — the heart alone can do him justice.'

"This encomium seems extravagant and enthusiastic, and it probably is somewhat so; but it is exactly such a notice as we could have written some years since, after hearing a sermon preached by Mr. B. in one of the Presbyterian churches of

this city. We are not ourselves attached to the Methodist persuasion, and this tribute, therefore, to the powers of an eloquent divine must not be attributed to any sectarian prejudice."

In short, wherever he went, the public press and the popular voice were eloquent in eulogy of his wonderful efforts. Infidels were reclaimed by the force of his reasoning, and sinners were awakened by the power of his startling appeals.

CHAPTER XVI.

EMBRACING HIS AGENCY OF THE COLONIZATION SOCIETY.

Mr. Bascom is appointed Agent of the American Colonization Society — His Views on that Subject — Journal of his first tour on that Mission — Popularity and Success — Notices of the Press — Preached much while in the Agency — Large Report of one of his Sermons — Perilous Stage Coach Accident.

In 1829, Mr. Bascom, having resigned the Presidency of Madison College, accepted a general agency of the American Colonization Society.

He had, from a very early age, as we have seen, stood in a state of consistent antagonism to the wild schemes of ultra abolitionists, but the plan of colonizing the free people of color of this country in the land of their forefathers, he regarded as one of real benevolence, promising large benefits to that unhappy portion of the African race. He saw them alike permanently without the privileges and motives of freemen and the restraints and guardianship of a state of slavery; more miserable, generally, than a state of absolute bondage; and he saw that there was no hope of their redemption from it, while they remained among a white race, save in the impracticable

and revoltingly unnatural expedient of amalgamation — no real hope but in placing them in a community of their own equals and color, and under the influence of a new and higher class of motives to self-elevation. He saw that the presence and degradation of this class operated restrainingly on the benevolent feelings of masters who were inclined to give freedom to their slaves, by destroying all motives to such attempts.

He believed, too, that the establishment of colonies of colored people from this country, in the benighted regions of Africa, would be the most effectual means of extending the blessings of civilization and Christianity to that dark and blood stained continent.

Under these and kindred views of the subject, he entered on his work with all the ardor and enthusiasm of his nature, and wherever he went, he left the impress of his stirring appeals on the hearts and minds of the people.

We can give few details — were it even desirable to do so, — of Mr. Bascom's operations in this agency; he has, however, left some account of his first tour in this service. And as an interest now attaches to almost all his proceedings, we shall give the reader the substance of what we find in his journal kept during that tour.

"August 21, 1829. Left Pittsburg alone and on horseback. My route was by the Erie turn-

pike road, which led me through a dreary, desolate, man-and-womanless region. Had a *soso* dinner at C—'s, where were several *soso* looking talkative girls, mostly of age and full grown. In the afternoon rode to B—; and while riding through a dense rayless forest of trees and underwood, was suddenly started by the soul-freezing scream of a panther. He followed me about a quarter of a mile, keeping about a hundred yards from the road and parallel with it, screaming every half minute in a manner that greatly frightened my horse, and filled me with horror. On reaching B—, I found my landlord drunk. Retired to my room, read and wrote a few hours, and then tried for a supperless sleep. 22. My way was through as dreary a region of country as I ever beheld, with little to amuse, except an abundance of great horse-flies, lazy husbands, dirty wives, and ragged children. About noon, met a bevy of giggling, stockingless girls going to visit a show that was to be exhibited on the road. Dined on fat middling and fried eggs, and passed the night at a tavern where I was annoyed by the noise and vulgarity of a parcel of Irish wagoners — half beast — half devil, from whom I was relieved only by their getting too drunk to continue their revel. 23. Rode to G—, to breakfast — had a decent repast, and a decent landlady to look upon while I was eating it. The country began to improve a little,

but still deplorably poor and uninteresting. Found a poor tavern that night; but was in little danger of suffering from *plethora*, as I had numerous bed fellows who took blood freely without consulting my pulse. 24. Had a breakfast that might have substituted an emetic, prepared by the 'good wife,' who might, had she floated down the Nile, been safe from molestation by alligators, if filth would frighten them. Dined at W—, and in the evening reached Erie, and here I found excellent accommodations at the hotel of my friend, Mr. McC. 25. In Erie. 26. Visited old Fort Presque isle, and other objects of interest. 27 Visited the wrecks of Perry's fleet, and the British vessels Queen Charlotte, and ———, and brought away pieces of wood from each. 28. Started with Mr. and Mrs. McC., to a camp meeting near Westfield, N. Y., and arrived the same evening. 29. Preached to a large crowd with apparent success. 30. Sunday. Preached again to about five thousand hearers with encouraging effect. 31. Delivered an address on colonization, formed a society of near one hundred members, and collected seventy dollars, and at night preached again. — Deep and universal feeling. September 1. Was sick, but read and wrote all day. 2. Spent in the same way. There was at the inn at which I tarried, an old lady laboring in the kitchen for her daily bread, with whom I had boarded while at school.

She was then independent and happy; but drunkenness made her husband a beast, and threw her dependent and pennyless on the world. She wept like a child while relating the story of her wrongs and sufferings.

"3. Started for Buffalo, rode all day through a forest of hemlock and pine, which is yielding to the industry of a company of New England emigrants. 4. Reached Buffalo late in the evening. This is a fine showy young city, with a population of seven thousand. Many things interested me until ten the next morning — the lake, the harbors, shipping, steamers, the canal with its legion of boats, with all the excitement and bustle of enterprise. 5. For the first time in my life I set foot on British soil, having crossed at Black Rock into Upper Canada on my way to the Falls. At my right hand rolled the majestic Niagara with the waters of Erie, St. Clair, Huron, Michigan and Superior on their eternal tour to the ocean, — on the left lay a finely cultivated country until I reached Chippewa. Here I dined, and surveyed the famous battle-ground, — the scene of a severe conflict in the late war with Great Britain.

"At five o'clock in the evening I reached the pavilion, and was soon at the table rock gazing at the most magnificent spectacle that ever chained the eye of a beholder — a world of water rolling and tumbling in thunder and foam. As I gazed,

I felt a depth, a devotion, an unutterable intensity of admiration, that after two hours made my brain reel, and so unstrung my nervous system, that it was with difficulty I crawled from the verge of the rock, and returned to the pavilion, — where, in the portico of the third story, in full view of the Falls, I returned to their contemplation by moonlight, and paced the colonade in wonder and astonishment until mere exhaustion drove me, at twelve o'clock, to my room to seek repose.

"6th. I continued my exploration of the Falls — crossed the gulf below, and from the American side, and from Goat Island, still gazed on the mighty cataract from fifty different points of view. 7th. Ascended the spiral stair case at Table Rock — a flight of one hundred and five steps, and, provided with a guide, ventured as far under the great falling sheet of water as ever human being had dared to go. Divesting myself of my clothing, and belting a mantle of oil-cloth about me, I penetrated with difficulty and danger, amid thunder and foam and spray, as far as Termination Rock, one hundred and fifty-three feet under the vast falling column, and then pausing elevated my eyes to look on the universe of water that was tumbling over me, while a slip of the foot must have precipitated me fifty fathoms into the gulf below, where the angry element was tossing and heaving with infuriate life and uproar. After

a moment's pause I commenced my retreat, and effected my return in safety — thankful to God that my temerity had not been chastised with instant death. The remaining part of the day was spent in a farewell survey of the Falls from the various points I had visited before. When I returned to the pavilion, it was night, and having been seldom so much fatigued in my life, I was glad to retire to rest.

"8th. Visited Lundy's Lane, of bloody memory in the history of the late war; and when it was pointed out, curiosity led me to the spot where three hundred Americans, dead and wounded, were heaped together in a single pile, and burnt as a hecatomb offered to the god of war. I shed an involuntary tear to the memory of the brave, and in my heart cursing the savage science of war, proceeded on my way to the battle-ground of the Beaver-dams, and from thence on the tow-path of the Welland Canal, wound my way to St. Catharines. Here I met my aged aunt, whom I had not seen for twenty-six years, with mingled emotions of joy and regret. 9th. Spent with my aunt in talking over the scenes, sufferings, and enjoyments of by-gone days. In the evening we walked to the Church of England burying-ground, to look upon the graves of the deceased part of her family. She had survived them all, save one son. A neat stone tells the story of each member of the family.

"10th. I left Upper Canada by way of Queenstown for Lewiston, N. Y. Visited the battle-ground of Queenstown heights, and saw Brock's monument. Crossed the river, passed through Lewiston, and rode four miles into the country to spend the night with a friend from Maryland.

"11th. Reached the house of my cousin early, and remained until after dinner, and then rode to Buffalo. 12th. Spent in Buffalo.

"13th. Preached at eleven in the Methodist church, and at night delivered an address in the Presbyterian church, and took a collection.

"14th. Spent in attempting to organize a society, but finally postponed it until my return. 15th. Rode to Batavia through an exceedingly handsome, but not very fertile country.

"16th. Left my horse, and took stage for Canandaigua, and 17th, arrived at C———, a very handsome village at the head of the lake of the same name. 18th. Remained and read. 19th. Went to Geneva, at the head of Geneva lake. 20th. Sunday. It rained all day. I modestly sought an opportunity to preach, but received no invitation, so I rested and heard two sermons at the P..... church—good but feeble.

"21st. Exerted myself in trying to excite an interest in my mission, but met with great difficulty and discouragement, as I have in every place in New York. The people in this region, I

think, are less liberal than in the west and south. 22d. At night went to hear a lecture by Rev. Mr. D ,— a common sense talk without animation. Spent half the night in reading works on Africa. 23d. At night had an appointment for an address, but as there were several conflicting appointments, I adjourned mine to the next night, when I formed a society of twenty-five and took up a small collection, which under the circumstances I regarded rather as a triumph. 25th. Went to Canandaigua, but as the Presbyterians refused me the church, I left for Rochester on the 26th. The blue stocking parson at the former place treated me with boorish incivility. I had no sooner announced myself a Methodist preacher, than he bristled almost into a swine, and grunted his negative most becomingly. I promptly left him, hating bigotry more implacably than ever before.

"At Rochester I was received with every demonstration of welcome by Rev. Mr. L., who speedily opened the way for the accomplishment of the object of my mission. 27th. Sunday. At eleven preached in the Presbyterian church, at two in the Methodist, and at night addressed an overwhelming crowd, who received my message with audible murmurs of approbation. 28th. Tried Batavia again — but in vain, and left for Buffalo. That night went to hear a B. preacher. It was anything but preaching, yet the man appeared

sincere in his ignorance, and I truly pitied him. After preaching, several old Methodists present spoke as in class meeting, and I was much gratified in listening to the unaffected effusions of seven or eight who spoke.

"29th. Rode to Buffalo, and wrote letters till ten o'clock at night.

"30th Wrote nearly all day — weather bad, and prospect for meeting to-night gloomy. I am now retreating from western New York, and do not regret it, for though appearances are fine, it is, on the score of solid comfort, cordial welcome, and generous hospitality the least attractive region I ever visited. Even the table accommodations are the most inferior I have ever found among people in tolerable circumstances:—Sheep steaks, mutton chops, bad beef, stale cheese, inferior beds, fireless rooms, bustle without attendance, and finally a heavy bill for what you cannot get there, is the usual round.

"At night formed the nucleus of a society, but got no money, and am almost tempted to vow *nazaritically* that I will not make another attempt in western New York.

"October 1. Started westward, along the beach of Lake Erie, facing a sharp wind. Met with a group of Indians, and when I addressed them in the Seneca language, their surprise was really amusing. At the inn where I tarried that night I

met with a minister from one of the middle districts of Old Scotia, with whom I was not a little amused. He said the people of this country were only fit to be preached to by Methodist preachers — that when he did preach, they would not pay him, and that preaching without pay was a great *farce*. The broad gutterel, and occasionally sharp nasal twang of this redoubtable son of the Kirk, together with his clownish manners, carrotty poll, and ill built frame, were strikingly unique. He said he had never been in the company of a Methodist preacher — that he had seen one, but that he felt contempt for his shabby appearance. I informed him that I was one; on which he hastily withdrew and went to bed. I learnt that he was proposing to teach school for fifteen dollars per month.

"2nd, Rode, and 3rd, arrived at Erie to breakfast.

"Sunday, 4. At eleven o'clock heard Rev. Mr. L., Presbyterian, and communed with the congregation. At two o'clock preached in the Presbyterian church to a large audience, and at night delivered an address, and took a collection.

"5th. Rode, and 6th reached Meadville, and met with marked attention, and genuine hospitality from several of the principal citizens.

"7th. Rode to Franklin — on the evening of the 8th preached, and on the morning of the 9th delivered an address on colonization, took a collection, and returned to Meadville. Stopped an hour

at the house of widow P and prayed with the family. 10th, spent in Meadville.

"Sunday, 11th. At eleven o'clock preached at Presbyterian church, and at half past two, plead the cause of Africa before about one thousand hearers, and took a collection of fifty-six dollars.

"12th. Rode to Mercer, had a great crowd at night, and a good collection.

"13th. Rode to Butler — a large audience — was disturbed by some drunkards. Light collection.

"14th. Reached Pittsburg and remained two days.

"17th. Went to Steubenville, 18th preached, 19th, went to Wheeling, Va.

"20th. In Wheeling. 21st. An address in the Episcopal church to about one thousand. Collection one hundred and forty-five dollars. 22nd. Steubenbenville. Address, and collection thirty-three dollars.

"23rd. Mt. Pleasant. — Address and collection fifty-one dollars. 24th. St. Clairsville, collection twenty-one dollars. 25th, Washington, Pa., collection thirty-five dollars. 26th to 29th, in Pittsburg.

"30st. Rode to Williamsport and delivered an address. 31st. Shall go to Belleville.

"November 1. Brownsville, and, God willing, home—to Uniontown—the same evening!

No other portion of his public labors called forth so universally the high eulogies of the press

and the multitude, as those devoted to the colonization cause. He traveled in this service through a large proportion of the states of the Union, and from each of these, I find the most complimentary notices of his addresses. These we shall not think of copying, for they would occupy no inconsiderable space in this volume; but a few we cannot well pass over. We particularly notice the attempts of two able editors to catch his leading thoughts, and note down his most striking expressions. They belonged to cities many hundred miles distant from each other, and wrote at different dates. The train of thought in the speaker's introductory remarks, appears to have been very much the same in both the cases reported, and it is worthy of note, that both these editors — so well versed in the art of reporting public speeches for publication — succeeded tolerably, only, in following the speaker through his introduction, — but when he entered fully into his subject, and his eloquence came pouring upon them in a very cataract, pencil and note book were dropped, and they abandoned the fruitless attempt to paint his lightning and put his thunder into words.

The first says — "On Sunday evening last, the Rev. H. B. Bascom made an eloquent appeal in the Murray street church, in this city, before the Young Men's Colonization Society.

"'To the antiquarian, and the historian, ancient

Africa is a subject of inexhaustible interest. However inclined some skeptics may be to dispute the fact, the country of the Pharaohs was undoubtedly the parent of art and of science, and the great luminary of the ancient world. At a period when the soil of Greece, and Italy were covered with primeval forests, affording shelter only to wild beasts, or to a few roving barbarians hardly less ferocious, the valley of the Nile was occupied by a people, who had already built temples in honor to their gods, and reared columns to commemorate their kings. Nor does this high antiquity rest merely on doubtful chronologies, or on vague antiquarian speculation. On the contrary, it is demonstrated by facts about which there neither is, nor can be, any controversy.

"'So early as the days of Moses, Egypt had become pre-eminent in laws, learning, and art, as well as in political power. Even in that remote age, the "learning and wisdom of the Egyptians" had become proverbial. In after times, Thales, Pythagoras, Plato, and others, all acquired in Egypt, the elements of that science which they afterward taught with such success to their countrymen, and even the rudiments of Grecian art, the originals of those beautiful forms, which the fine genius of the Greeks improving upon, raised to an almost ideal perfection, may be distinctly traced to the banks of the Nile.

"'Egypt, which was settled by Mizraim, the son of Ham, was once the most opulent and important empire in the world. She had at one time, her forty-five petty kingdoms, and her twenty thousand cities; and in the reign of Asa, king of Judah, Ethiopia alone could send an army of one million into the field.

"'Degraded as the Africans now are, it will, perhaps, scarcely be believed that this contemned race, as to intellect, can exhibit a brighter ancestry than our own. They are the offshoots, wild and untrained, it is true, but still they are the offshoots of a stem once proudly luxuriant in the fruits of various learning and taste. They are the offspring of Cush, Mizraim, and Phut. They found Egypt a morass, and converted it into the most fertile country of the world. They reared its pyramids, invented its hieroglyphics, gave letters to Greece and Rome, and through them to us. The everlasting architecture of Africa still exists the wonder of the world, though in ruins. Her mighty ones have yet their record in history. She has poured forth her heroes on the field. She has given bishops to the church, and martyrs to the flames. And for negro physiognomy, as if that could shut out the light of intellect, let us go to the capital of the British empire, and in their national museum contemplate the collossal head of Memnon, and behold, in imperishable porphyry

and granite, the unfounded and pitiful slander publically refuted.

"'But Africa has been degraded, insulted, and wronged, for many centuries. She has been robbed of her children to an immeasurable extent. What wind has passed over her plains without catching up the sighs of broken and bleeding hearts? Which of the sands of her deserts has not been steeped in tears, wrung out by the pang of separation from kindred and country? And the "cup of trembling" has been put to her lips again and again, even by baptized hands.'"

After giving this as an imperfect quotation, in the following paragraph he concedes, that the more "powerful" part was that which he has not attempted to report at all. He says:

"In some such observations as the above, did Mr. B. prepare the way for a more powerful appeal to the hearts of his audience on the subject of the Colonization Society; and after an ample detail of its operations, and a course of argument fraught with much skill, enriched with powerful eloquence, and managed with uncommon address, the preacher brought his subject to a close, and his audience to the point in hand, the result of which was a very handsome collection, amounting to about two hundred and fifteen dollars."

The other first gives a vague outline of the address — perhaps as an allowable stroke of

policy — and quotes what he had been able to note down of the introduction, as follows:

"After the report of this committee and the election of officers, the Rev. Mr. Bascom, agent of the American Colonization Society, addressed the meeting for more than two hours, in behalf of the society. In discussing the subject and presenting his plea for colonizing our free people of color, on the western coast of Africa, he presented strong arguments in language equally strong and expressive. He urged his plea for African colonization, on the grounds of justice, of practicability, of political consistency, of obligation and gratitude, of the predictions of the scriptures in regard to Africa, and of the final retributions of eternity.

"The picture which he presented of what Africa once was, and of what she now is, and the causes of her present degradation, struck every mind with admiration, and made every heart thrill with pity and indignation. 'Once,' said he, 'Africa stood proud in learning, arts, and arms. Her pyramids, obelisks, and the granite pillars of her ruined cities, stand in gloomy magnificence, monuments of her architectural skill. She furnished her heroes for the field of battle, and her bishops for the church of God. To learning and religion she had ably contributed. But why wonder at her present depression, rifled as she has

been of her blood and treasure by every Christian nation. To the shrine of European cupidity, it is computed that *one hundred and ninety millions* of her inhabitants have been sacrificed. To every nation, Christian and infidel, she has in vain raised her cry of supplication. In reply, she receives only an additional weight of chains. Every gale that blows over her, catches the sound of her groans, and almost every foot of her soil is stained and wet with her blood, shed by Christian steel.'

"He showed, with much clearness and force, that the suppression of the slave trade, and the redemption of Africa from her present political and religious degradation and suffering, is to be effected only by colonization. In this way, civilization and Christianity were introduced into Greece, Europe, and America. We cannot do justice to Mr. Bascom's speech by attempting a sketch of it. For more than two hours, he held his audience in rapt and unwearied attention."

We recollect instances in which one of Mr. Bascom's addresses, delivered in small villages — mere hamlets — brought collections of from three hundred to four hundred dollars.

Mr. Bascom was not, while engaged in the duties of his agency, neglectful of the great business of preaching the gospel of Christ; for in almost every place where he delivered addresses,

and especially where he spent a Sabbath, he preached to multitudes, and with great power and effect.

On one of these occasions, he visited a town on the Ohio river, and preached to a large audience, in which was one hearer, at least, who appears to have been quite as much enraptured with the sermon, as was Mr. Wirt with that of James Waddle, the blind preacher. The following glowing description of the preacher and sermon he published in a New York city paper:

"It was a day of exceeding beauty, that last Sunday in May, 1832 — a day of soft balmy air, and sunshine bright and glorious as the smile of God. Before ten o'clock, every pew and every seat in the spacious church was filled to overflowing. The whole population of Lawrenceburg, a lovely little town on the Ohio river, in Indiana, appeared to have turned out to hear 'the great orator,' whose fame had traveled in advance of his coming. It was his first visit to that State, and hence the general anxiety to witness his effort. All eyes were turned to the door, and (as the winged minutes flew away) with many signs of disappointment, as no one entered to answer the very circumstantial description of his person, which had the previous day been published in the papers.

"The hour of eleven arrived, and the well-

known parson of the station began the devotional exercises by singing and prayer. At this, the tokens of vexation increased with all, and with a portion of the audience, so far as to amount to positive rudeness.

"At length, the prayer was ended, when a form, hitherto concealed by the mahogany front of the pulpit, suddenly emerged from behind it, and stood for more than two minutes erect, silent, and motionless as a statue. At this apparition, every individual in the immense throng started, and every heart thrilled with a nameless emotion; it so struck the senses, and there was so much eloquence in his attitude, his immobility, nay, in his very silence.

"His figure was of perfect symmetry; his features of classic mould; his brow pure Grecian in its outlines, and surrounded with a fine circle of jet black hair. His countenance seemed intensely intellectual, without the slightest perceptible trace of animal passion; but his eyes, at the moment, were dreamy, expressionless, and set on empty space, as if he were totally unconscious of any presence other than the ideal of his own deep thoughts; his dress was of the richest cloth, and made in the latest fashion.

"Presently he raised his right hand with a gesture of impetuous haste, and pressed his fingers on his pale forehead, as if to assist the brain in its

mighty labors of thought, and then instantly announced his text from the book of Revelations: 'Behold! I make all things new.' Without preface or apology — those flimsy crutches of lame preachers — he pierced at once into the heart of his subject, and then took wings and rode away on a whirlwind of fiery words. His voice, from the commencement, rolled, and pealed, and rang like the beautifully modulated music of some wondrous organ, alternating with crashes of tremendous power that seemed to jar the walls of the building as if an avalanche were rushing out of the clouds. Now it sunk into a wild wail, mellow and plaintive as a funeral chime; again it swelled to the steady roar of a hurricane, if a hurricane indeed could be attuned to such octaves of harmony; and then it would break out in successive thunder-claps, causing the very hair to rise on the hearer's head, and the warm marrow to creep, as it were, in his bones. The effect was aided, too, by the orator's gesticulation — now graceful as the airy circles of a butterfly in the air; and anon, grand to sublimity, and urgent as the swoop of the eagle climbing the heights of the storm cloud. His eye — at the outset, as we have said, dim and dreary — now burned, and flashed, and lightened, till aided by the illusions of fancy and the scene, it appeared to dart arrows of flame around the assembly.

"As the mighty magician went on, the entire multitude seemed charged with electricity. Here and there single individuals began to rise involuntarily to their feet; then others rose by twos and threes; next a dozen sprang up together; and finally, the whole, living, throbbing, enthusiastic mass might be seen standing as one man, with fixed, straining eyeballs, devouring the speaker with a gaze, with half-parted lips, and teeth clenched by attention. The excitement was measureless, and yet too profound for any species of utterance. Not a sigh, not a whisper was heard. Nothing could be heard save the voice of the orator; and during the intervals of his pauses the fall of a pin would have been audible.

"His subject, too, was unique as his manner. His theme was: 'The future eternity of matter; its natural capacity for indefinite and glorious changes; and the *possible* splendor of the *new* heavens and earth.' His method of discussion was purely rational and scientific — that is to say, by analysis. A few of his inimitable touches linger in my memory to the present hour. He inferred the beauty of which all, even the coarsest, matter is capable, from the following illustration:

"'Chemistry, with its fire-tongue of the galvanic battery, teaches that the starry diamond in the crown of kings, and the black carbon which the peasant treads beneath his feet, are both composed

of the same identical elements; analysis also proves that a chief ingredient in limestone is carbon. Then let the burning breath of God pass over all the limestone of earth, and bid its old mossy layers crystalize into new beauty; and lo! at the almighty *fiat* the mountain ranges flash into living gems with a lustre that renders midnight noon, and eclipses all the stars!'

"He urged the same view by another example still better adapted to popular apprehension.

"'Look yonder,' said the impassioned orator, pointing a motionless finger towards the lofty ceiling, as if it were the sky; 'see that wrathful thunder-cloud — the fiery bed of the lightnings and hissing hail — the cradle of tempests and floods! What can be more dark, more dreary, more dreadful? Say, scoffing sceptic, is it capable of any beauty? You pronounce, 'no.' Well, very well, but behold, while the sneering denial curls your proud lips, the sun with his sword of light shears through the sea of vapors in the West, and laughs in your incredulous face with his fine golden eye. Now, look again at the thunder-cloud! See where it was blackest and fullest of gloom, the sun-beams have kissed its hideous cheek; and where the kiss fell there is now a blush, brighter than ever mantled on the brow of mortal maiden — the rich blush of crimson and gold, of purple and vermilion — a pictured blush, fit for the gaze

of angels — the flower-work of pencils of fire and light, wrought at a dash by one stroke of the right hand of God! Ay, the ugly cloud hath given birth to the rainbow, that perfection and symbol of unspeakable beauty!

"It is impossible to paint the effects of such sunbursts of eloquence, delivered in his peculiar voice and manner. For my own part, I experienced emotions of sublimity and admiration, commingled with mysterious awe. I gazed and shuddered, as if looking into the heart of a volcano, or listening to the mutterings of an earthquake. Who dares call this comparison a hyperbole? — Hath the grandest elements of nature any manifestation of power superior to the lofty action of intellect inflamed by the friction of a winged imagination?"

Somewhere about this time he encountered an accident, which came near to costing him his life. He was going up the Ohio river; but the water was so low, that at Marietta he had to leave the boat and take the mail coach for Wheeling. On some portions of the way, the road was terraced into the high river hills, and lay at an elevation of a hundred feet or more above the valley. At one of those dangerous passes, where the head grew dizzy in looking down on the river far beneath, — the descent very precipitous, and the road narrow, the coach came upon a short curve

which it was difficult to pass with safety; just as the driver had brought his "lead horses" as close into the hill as possible, to carry the coach clear of the chasm at the curve, the horses took fright and dashing furiously to the opposite side, plunged headlong over the precipice, carrying coach, driver, and passengers with them. Down, down, they went through the air and tree tops, until the coach came to the ground in a upright position, on a sort of natural bench of the hill; the wheels were broken to pieces, and flew off in different directions; the coach bed crushed, the passengers stunned to insensibility, the wheel horses killed, the driver thrown with violence from his box, and dragged by the leaders — the reins being wrapped around his hand — down the hill, and far into the river, where he came near drowning. The coach, divested of its wheels, rolled on over and over until stopped by some obstruction, and was reduced to a complete wreck. Bascom was, I think, first restored to consciousness; he was much cut and bruised, but none of his wounds were dangerous. Some others revived in a similar condition; two passengers — one a lady — were for a time supposed to be dead; but soon showing signs of remaining life, Bascom and his fellow passengers set about rendering such assistance as they could to the greater sufferers. One drew the insensible lady and gentleman from the wreck, another went

to relieve the poor driver, who, after having been dragged over the rocks, was now standing in water to his neck, and unable to free himself from the reins, while Bascom ran to the river and brought water in his hat to revive the yet insensible sufferers.

All were injured, but all recovered; most of them were able to proceed on their journey the next day. But the wonder is, that any should have escaped death.

CHAPTER XVII.

Mr. Bascom elected Professor of Moral Science and Belles-Lettres in Augusta College — Still devotes a portion of his Time to the Agency — Transferred to Kentucky Conference, and Election to General Conference of 1832 — Made Chairman of Committee on Temperance — Produces a Report of Great Power — Concluding Passage of it given — A Peculiarity in Bascom's mind noticed — Attempts to account for it — Affliction and Death of his Father — Descriptive Account of that event — Bascom's own Account of it, as given to Mr. Bruce.

In 1832, Mr. Bascom was elected professor of Moral Science and Belles-lettres in Augusta College. But as the duties of his chair in college did not demand the appropriation of all his time, he still retained his office of Agent, devoting to it what time he could spare from college duties.

This year Mr. Bascom was again elected a delegate to the General Conference, from the Kentucky annual conference, although he had but just been transferred from the Pittsburg conference. This was a gratifying expression of confidence on the part of his Kentucky brethren, among whom, in former years, he had encountered no little opposition.

We see here, that notwithstanding his recent connection with what was called the radical movement, his acknowledged talents and integrity, secured to him the confidence of his brethren so

strongly, that — though generally much opposed to that movement — they elected him, at the very session at which he became a member of their body, to be their representative in the highest judicatory of the church. And the like confidence was manifested by the General Conference; for we find him placed on the committee on temperance, and charged with the responsibility of preparing the report of that committee. The church had had a stringent rule on this subject from the beginning, but General Conference action on the subject, with a view to operate on public opinion, and enlist the active co-operation of the ministry and membership of the church in an effort to check this swelling tide of ruin, was a new proceeding, and required to be committed to the custody of faithful and skillful hands. The trust was happily confided to Mr. Bascom, who produced a report, which the venerable Dr. Bangs has thought sufficiently important, to make a part of the history of the church, and has accordingly incorporated it in her annals.

This report we cannot find room for at length, but must at least be allowed to introduce its final paragraph, which reads as follows: —

"Finally, persuaded, as we are, that intemperance, in all its aspects and gradations, is a physical evil, unmitigated by any mixture of good, and also a moral offence against the laws of God, and the

claims of Christian piety, unmodified by any indemnifying consideration whatever, we would at all times, but at this time especially, when such combined and powerful efforts are making to arrest the evil, cast in our dividend of social and moral aid, and do all in our power to accomplish an object every way as momentous as it is desirable. And we close by remarking, that we look upon all as implicated in the duty and the interest, and we shall cheerfully and promptly concur with all in an effort to expel the demon of intemperance, not only from the church, but from the nation, whose *welfare* and *fortune* must be always in intimate connection with its morals."

We may here notice a peculiarity in the character of Mr. Bascom's mind and habits. In deliberative bodies we expect to find men of the most commanding eloquence occupying the floor as speakers much more than those less gifted in that way; and we often find men who speak much and ably in such assemblies, of little service in the closet or committee room in preparing business for the action of the body, while it is very common to find men of superior abilities in the latter sphere, who have not the ability to advocate, in public speeches, the measures their wisdom has brought to a high degree of perfection in their private labors. But in the instance of Mr. Bascom we have a man who in eloquence was pre-eminently superior to his

brethren, and yet that eloquence was never employed in conference, even in support of favorite measures which he had matured and mastered thoroughly in the closet or the committee room. I think he never in his whole life made a single speech in an Annual or General Conference of ten minutes duration. A single suggestion, a correction, or the like, he would occasionally make in few words, but nothing more. Indeed, few men in Annual or General Conference had so little to say on the floor as he, and yet his reports, and even sententious suggestions had almost the weight and authority of law.

Frequent attempts have been made to account for this peculiarity, and generally with but little success. Some have conjectured that his public addresses of every kind were carefully written out, and either read or delivered from memory, and that he was not willing to trust his reputation to the hazards of extemporaneous debate. This is entirely erroneous; for he had reached the zenith of his fame as an orator before he had delivered a single public address either from manuscript or from memory: these auxiliaries, or rather hindrances, were fallen on only after he had passed his culmination: others have supposed that, conscious of his great influence, he was unwilling to employ the power with which he was gifted to bring others to his views, lest he might incur the responsibility

of misleading those who confided so trustingly to his superior wisdom. But he possessed neither the unreasonable scrupulousness, nor the inordinate vanity which this view of the case must impute to him. The truth is that *diffidence* was the real cause of his refraining as he did from participating in the ordinary debates of the bodies to which he belonged. True, he was opposed to speech making on trivial occasions, but then he was silent alike on great occasions as on those of least importance. It was ever a fearful cross with him to speak in public, and to the last, he always rose to address an audience with trembling timidity. This sacrifice he could afford to subject himself to for the good he hoped to do in a sermon of one or two hours, addressed to thousands, but not for the small benefits likely, in his estimation, to result from a speech of fifteen minutes delivered on some question of minor moment. Indeed, he could not make a short speech worth hearing had he attempted it; the machinery of Bascom's great intellect could no more put itself into full action in ten or fifteen minutes, than an ocean steamer could.

Mr. Bascom was connected with the Augusta College for a period of ten years; and though, in the routine of mere college duty, we cannot expect to find much of variety or stirring incident, yet within that period occurred several of the most

important events of his life, some of which, at least, we shall notice.

One of those events was the death of his father, which took place in 1833. His devotedness to his afflicted and indigent parent, in the infirmities and sufferings of age, was one of his most beautiful traits of character; and never had filial piety a lovelier manifestation than in the case of Henry Bascom. His father's affliction was protracted through a series of years, but through all, and to the last moment of life, Henry never relaxed in his attentions and his efforts to render the evening of his father's days as comfortable and happy as possible. And with him, it was not enough, that he borrowed money to procure for him the comforts of life, and so involved himself in perpetual embarrassment; but at great sacrifice, he gave his personal attention, his labors, his watchings, his soothing kindness, his counsels of encouragement.*

In the first year of his professorship at Augusta, there appears to have been complaints made, that he spent more time in attendance on his sick father, than was consistent with his duties to the college. On this subject, he wrote to the late Dr. Ruter, then President of the college. The Dr.

* To make himself wakeful while watching by the bed of his sick father, it was his custom to lie on the floor with a block of wood for his pillow.

replies, that such complaints can only proceed from narrow minds, and that the permanent effect of his course must be to elevate him in the esteem of all whose good opinion has any real value. Thus encouraged, he followed out the inclinations of his affectionate heart, in ministering to the comfort of his suffering parent. He even went into the forest, and with his own hands, cut and hauled wood for the use of the family, and, day and night, performed all the offices of servant, nurse, and son.

The closing scene at length came, and though long expected, it fell like a thunderbolt on the head of Henry. Below will be found an extract from a sketch of that scene, drawn by another hand:

"The blasts of winter had succeeded to the livery of autumn, without adorning the leafless branches with the fairy frost-work which is that season's own peculiar decoration. The mist hung in heavy masses over the water, giving additional cheerlessness to the scene; and sad indeed it was to know, that the desolation of nature was but a faint emblem of that which reigned within the silent dwelling. The windows on one side of the house were entirely closed, while those shutters in front that were opened were yet unfastened, as though hastily thrown aside to admit the light of day, while yet the inmates were too much absorbed

to do aught that was not absolutely necessary. The past night had been to them one of no common interest, for the father of that family lay on his dying bed, and in the apartment were assembled those connected with him by the nearest and strongest ties — the ties of kindred blood, affection and intellect. The almost unexampled suffering that had marked the last years of his life, had but the more endeared him to those who had witnessed his patient endurance and cheerful acquiescence to the will of God. True, they knew he was to leave the vale of sorrow for the realm of peace — that he was to exchange the tortures of a living death for the joys of a blissful immortality; but the voice of nature would not be repressed; the claims of affection would be recognized, and the gushing tears and convulsive sobs of those around, told how strong were the links now to be dissevered by the destroyer. But in despite of the pangs of approaching dissolution, the countenance of the saint of God revealed the peace that reigned within, and all beheld the dominion of principle and the reasoned conviction of the understanding, regulating the devotion of the heart, and all its tender and lofty impulses, at the approach of death. He spoke of the truth and power of Christianity, with the confidence of one who knows its value. His faith and his hope were connected with a life of piety, and looked forward

to the reward of virtue, as secured by the covenant of our common redemption. The dying patriarch had intimated his last wishes to his family; like Jacob, had bequeathed to each his blessing, and felt but slight anxiety for those whose oversight he could devolve on *one*, alike his hope, his joy, his pride, and his reliance. Tremblingly alive to all his wants and wishes, that *one* had stood beside him — now he supported the sinking head — now presented the cooling draught; and ever and anon, as he failed to understand the faltering accents, pressed his brow in agony on his father's hand. The last conflict was now approaching, and in his character, as one of Heaven's ordained ministers, Henry administered to the dying believer, the emblems of the broken body and shed blood of the Redeemer. Once more, the father listened to the words of inspiration, inestimable from any source, and still receiving an added charm when breathed by one so dear; and never, though admiring crowds had hung entranced and spell-bound by his heaven-breathed eloquence — no, never, had that gifted one appeared so all-commanding, so worthy of the homage of the heart, as when kneeling by the lowly couch, in prayer, his soul winged its flight to the bosom of its God. That prayer, no language can describe. The faltering accents of earthly love gradually rose to the strengthened voice of faith, then swelled to

the triumphant tones of assured glorious victory. Overmastered by his feelings, Henry paused, and overpowered by his fervid eloquence and deep devotion, all were hushed in silence. The father's arm was thrown around the son, whose hand was clasped in his, and the dark luxuriant curls of the younger formed a striking contrast, as pressed upon the same pillow, they mingled with the silvery locks, which —

> 'Like snow upon an alpine summit,
> Only proved their near approach to heaven.'

"The shutters were thrown open to admit the light, and as the rays filled the room, Henry

> 'Turned away,
> As though his heart abhorred the coming day,
> And shrunk his glance before the morning light,
> To look upon the brow where all grew night.'

"As the beams of the morning fell upon that brow, they revealed the traces of fearful suffering; and they only who have seen the one most dear to them writhe in agony, to which they cannot even offer alleviation — they only know the feeling which stamped upon Henry's features the impress of utter hopelessness. For a moment, too, the glorious hope of immortality was obscured. The past, the present, and the future of *this* world crowded on his mind, that he was to be bereft of the friend and counsellor, whose paternal feeling and generous solicitude had been his solace in many

an hour of trial and affliction — that 'mid the varied ills of life, he no more should be sustained by the consciousness that there existed at least one heart, in the kindly sympathies of which his bruised and anguished feelings never failed to find relief — that a nameless, heart-withering feeling of desolation was to succeed to scenes, that even sorrow and affliction had never rendered gloomy. An involuntary groan escaped him, and the father, though already in the arms of death, aroused once more. He fixed his dying gaze on his son, and though unmoved he had borne his sufferings — though in silence he had triumphed, and in composure seen the glories of the upper world bursting on his vision — he looked, and wept! Yes, though the first full draught of immortality had almost touched his lips, he wept! — for him whom he was about to leave alone and cheerless, with few to understand — perhaps with none to sympathize. Shocked at his father's evident emotion, Henry's devoted affection enabled him to repress his own; and the words of parting consolation which whispered the severance would be but short, and the re-union lasting, fell like Gilead's balm on the heart of the departing, and while concentrated in his look were faith, hope and love, 'glory to God,' trembling on his dying lips, was his only reply, and the last sentence he ever uttered."

In this connection, I will introduce an account

of this solemn event, with other matters, kindly furnished me by the Rev. J. G. Bruce. Speaking of the residence of Dr. Bascom's father, Mr. Bruce says, "Here I met the man who had filled the world with his fame, bending over the bed of a father, and ministering with the tenderest affection; and here I saw the same man repairing fences, cultivating the grounds, and laboring to exhaustion to make comfortable a large family, mainly dependent on him for support — and formed the highest opinion of his filial piety and noble generosity." Mr. B. met with Dr. Bascom in his old neighborhood several years after his father's death, where they held a meeting together. Mr. B. says: "Bascom preached, and carried his audience to the third heaven.

"After dinner, he requested me to take a walk with him to the grave yard, which was a few hundred yards below, in a bend of Eagle creek. The stream was washing away the bank, and encroaching on the burying ground, and he wished to make some arrangements for the protection of the dead. Having reached the ground, and seated ourselves at the root of a tree, Dr. Bascom proceeded to remark — 'There sleep my *father*, *mother*, and sister! Three purer mortals never lived or died. You knew the first; but the others had passed up to heaven long before your acquaintance with the family. Father's life was full of

suffering — his death replete with moral grandeur. For six weeks I had watched incessantly the ebbings of life. The rain had been falling heavily for several days, the waters were up, and it was impossible to get abroad, when he suggested to me that his end was near, and he desired to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper before his departure. I told him that as early as possible, I would send for a minister and have the sacrament administered. "No, my son," said he, "I wish to receive it at your hands alone." My soul was overwhelmed; but his will was my law. The elements were prepared, and we knelt at his bedside and performed for him the last solemn service this side the grave. He enjoyed it greatly, thanking God for the precious privilege. "Now, my son, I am ready to depart and be with Christ. But your mother (step-mother) and the children — will you take care of them?" Father, said I, do you doubt it? "No, Henry, no; I should not have asked you — I know you will. But one thing more — bury me beside your mother. And do you recollect that she was buried by moonlight, in consequence of a detention at the house?" I recollect it well, said I. "The moon gives light now, does it not?" he continued. I answered affirmatively. "Well then, *bury me by moonlight beside your mother.*" On being assured that it should be done as he wished, an ineffable light

spread over his countenance, and whispering his farewell to the family, he calmly fell asleep in Jesus.

'O may I triumph so
When all my warfare's passed,
And dying, find my latest foe
Beneath my feet at last!'

"Never," adds Mr. B., "did Bascom appear to me so truly great as at this moment. His heart heaving over the graves of buried friends, and his soul exulting in prospect of a re-union with them in Heaven."

CHAPTER XVIII.

He takes Charge of his Father's Family, consisting of Step-mother and her Children — With his heavy Burden of Debt and Family, fills Duties of his Chair, Preaches, delivers Addresses, &c. — Maffit — his Deseription of Baseom's Talents — Offered Presidency of Augusta College — Testimonial of Trustees — Elected to General Conference of 1836 — Visits Scene of Early Labors — Delivers Address at laying Corner Stone of Indiana Asbury University — Tenders his Resignation as Professor — Is not aeeepted, but Permission given to Travel — Invited to deliver Leetures on Infidelity, in Cineinnati — Delivers the Leetures in Cineinnati and in Louisville — Reeeives the Honorary Degree of D.D. — Invited to preach before Young Men's Missionary Soeiety of New York — Preaches with fine Effect — Noticcs by Kniekerboeker and others — First Interview with his Wife — Delivers Leetures on Infidelity, in New York — Notice by the Press — Visits and Leetures at divers Plaees — Visits Saratoga and Preaehes to a great Multitude in open air, and brings on Bronchial Affeetion — Notiee of this Sermon — Offered Agency at Salary of Three Thousand Dollars, but dcclines — Advised to go South for Health — Leetures in Philadelphia, Baltimore, &c., but had to desist — Report of Dr. Baseom's Death — Pleasant Contradiction of it — (Note) — Why did he thus peril his life? and why was he permitted to do so?

On the death of his father Mr. Bascom took his step-mother and the whole family to Augusta, and procuring a cottage, formed them into a household of which he was the head and provider. He had now a large family to feed, clothe and educate out of his own meagre salary.* True, some of his

* Seven hundred dollars per annum part of the time, and never more than one thousand dollars.

brothers had reached years of maturity, but as they were struggling, under circumstances of disadvantage, for subsistence for themselves, they could aid Henry but little in the support of his heavy charge.

It should be recollected that this large dependent family, for whose comfort Henry encountered such severe privations and embarrassments, were not his *own* mother, brothers and sisters, but a step-mother — to his father's alliance of whom he was averse — and half-brothers and sisters, save one, I think; yet, it was enough for him to know that the first was his father's widow, and the others his father's children: they enjoyed his kindest unremitting care and providence.

With a large debt hanging over him, an expensive family to support, and a small salary to rely on, Mr. Bascom's prospect of extrication from his pecuniary embarrassments was anything but cheering. Under all this burden, he however still struggled on, and not only discharged the duties of his professorship, but preached much, and made many public addresses on great occasions; and never did he stand higher as a public speaker of the first grade than at this time. He was sent for to go hundreds of miles to deliver addresses before colleges, at the dedication of churches, founding of literary institutions, religious and benevolent anniversaries, and the like. Sometimes such labors added a trifle to his low finances, but more

generally those who solicited his services seemed to think that payment of his expenses was all he had a right to expect, without compensation for time or labor; and indeed, sometimes he was compelled to bear his own expenses.

Nearly throughout the whole period of Dr. Bascom's public ministry the late Rev. John Newland Maffit was also before the public as a pulpit orator of uncommon brilliancy and popularity. He was often spoken of as Bascom's rival in eloquence, and of this he was well aware. About the period of which we are speaking, Mr. Maffit, having heard Mr. Bascom, expressed his opinion and admiration of his talents, in an article which we copy below.

"I consider Mr. Bascom one of the most extraordinary men of the age. As a pulpit orator he is an original; and is unrivaled in the Union — for none are like him. His path is emphatically his own, denying the possibility of comparison with that of others. His shining, therefore, dims no other light. He is the solitary star that fills with a flood of effulgence the skies of his own creation, and gilds with loveliness, the forms which have arisen at the call of his genius. His manner is like that of no living preacher. If you seek to find the model on which he fashions his sermons, it cannot be found in the libraries of the old or new world. If you would know the secret of his

strength, you must fathom the depths of an intellect, rich with rare and peculiar treasures; you must add to this the intensity of emotion with which he regards every subject that comes within the grasp of his mind. His baptism by the Holy Spirit, was with the tongue of flame. His mind, like the Olympic wrestlers, struggles for mastery wherever it grapples. Let him encounter 'the gnarled and unwedgeable oak' of error in its century-hallowed form, and the contact is like that of the electric fluid, rending and illuminating at once, but not like the fabled bolt of Jove, rendering 'sacred what it scarred.' The fortification which he demolishes, is ever after contemptible and untenable. The votary of error under any banner which Bascom may stoop to assail, ever afterwards will disown his flag, and be ashamed of his former inconsistency.

"It belongs only to a kindred mind, partaking of his own magnificence, to analyze Bascom. I shall have little to say, except in general descriptions. But were one to ask me, what is the secret of his influence? — how does he fill to the roof every church in which he speaks, and send away the admiring thousands of country, town, or city, filled with astonishment and rapture, or shame — repentance or praise — at his will? — I should answer, negatively, not by his oratorical action, for of this he has but little. You only see

that he is in earnest, by the bowing of his head, even when he is engaged in holding direct converse either with God or man. It is not in the power or intonations of his voice. For oratorical display, his voice would be considered a bad one; although it is fearfully distinct even in its husky whispers, and as rapidly strikes through his terse and keenly polished periods, as that brightest and swiftest of created elements, to which the corruscations of his genius may be most aptly likened, does through the folds of a thunder cloud. The audiences who sit open mouthed and breathless before him, are able to say little of his manner when they go away. The subject, only, and with an omnipotence of power, has stood before them, either as an angel of light, or a fearful demon; the one to sing 'peace on earth, good will to men,' the other to forestall doom, and threaten an eternity of wo.

"Reared in that great school of impassioned oratory, the West, he has also gained the concise and logical ratiocination of the East. Let the inflated individual, who has, in his boasted researches into philosophy, never gained sight of the shore of the great ocean of truth, where the child-like Newton stood, and only picked up pebbles in his own estimation; let this vain boaster but come within the action of Bascom's intellectual battery, and a faint smoke, or the mere ashes of a

consumed fabric, will only be left to tell where once he stood. Every argument silenced and destroyed; every link in the chain of error broken; every false refuge of it lies exploded; every dark hiding place of sin searched as with that streaming light which unhorsed the persecutor, Saul; how often has the infidel found himself in a short hour bereaved of his all on earth; his all for heaven! Then might he seek Christ when his gods had been demolished before his eyes, and their power scattered to the winds.

"Let Mr. Bascom but rebuke an ignorant, a slothful, or inefficient ministry, as he sometimes does in his sermons, and truly they may then say, that the scorching flame of judgment has first begun at the house of God — where shall the wicked and ungodly appear? The pulpit, in his view, is the holy of holies of the new dispensation, the call of God to his ministering servants, in his view, is the awful commission before which kings should stand dumb; and the man who bears this commission ignorantly or unworthily, or sleeping, or selfishly may dread that the fires of the angel-guarded *Shekinah* will consume him.

"Yet Mr. Bascom does not wear a chilling, demure look. He would have been ejected from the ancient and honorable sect of Pharisees, both on account of his short prayers and unelongated physiognomy. His thoughts are solemn as the

dawn of eternity; yet, his countenance is calm in purity of purpose, and earnest only in benevolence, while it overflows with the expression of goodness and amenity.

"To say that every subject which he touches he ornaments, is not expressive enough. He does indeed ornament; but not as other men do, by studied phrase and sounding epithets; he ornaments his subject by linking it to some grand and classical association. For this purpose he holds at command, the treasured lore of each country; he has the sublime imagery, which he has gleaned from earth, air, and ocean; he has the key of the past; he reads from the roll of prophecy, the revealings of the future. Images of immortal beauty, cluster in his argument; at his bidding damnation echoes back from its blackest deeps, the howling thunder of his warning, to flee from the wrath to come.

"Let him, as he often does, plead the cause of Africa, and you will see the ancient cities stir with life beneath the desert sands. You will see her ancient kings, statesmen, philosophers, coming up through the marble ruins of once proud palaces, to utter their voiceless, because unspeakable, charge against debased Christendom for enslaving, soul and body, the relics of a noble antiquity. His satire is keen; and will be remembered, although the polished arrow may wound so skillfully, and

with such exquisite science, as to make the pain almost a pleasure to the sufferer.

"But, as an honor to the Methodist communion in which he has long faithfully labored: as a blessing to the world: a leading star in the constellation of American literature, eloquence; and above all, as a faithful and successful preacher, the thousands of whose seals in the ministry, I see around me; if I cannot describe him, or emulate his powers, I can yet pray that his valuable life may be continued long on earth as a rich and peculiar blessing."

Such was the expressed opinion of Mr. Maffit, who, whatever else he was or was not, was certainly an orator of extraordinary ability, and therefore qualified to judge in a matter of this sort.*

He had not been long in the Augusta College until a desire was manifested that he should take the presidency of the institution, and among those who cherished this desire, was Dr. Ruter, who, in a letter in my possession, expresses such a wish. But, shrinking from both the confinement and the responsibility the office would impose, he constantly declined the offer. In 1835, however, some difficulty occurred respecting the presidency, and a

* Mr. Maffit died of broken heart, but a short time before the death of Mr. Bascom. In Bascom's last letter to the writer, he feelingly says — "Poor Maffit! he has at last fallen, a sacrifice to the demon of persecution!"

rumor was put afloat that he was seeking that office for himself. Perceiving Mr. Bascom was wronged, if not injured, by the report, the trustees came out in a unanimous declaration, to the effect that he had not only not sought the office, but had "repeatedly refused to accept the appointment," and they also adopted a resolution strongly approbatory of his course in the college.

In 1836, he was again elected to the General Conference, but took no very prominent part in its proceedings.

The same year he visited one of his first fields of labor — one which he had occupied twenty years prior to the date of this visit, and was received with great enthusiasm. Crowds attended his ministrations, and in the papers of the place appeared a most exalted eulogy on his talents and eloquence.

In June, 1837, he delivered an oration at the laying of the corner stone of the Asbury University, at Greencastle, Ia., to do which he had to travel more than two hundred miles by land. On his way thither, he preached at the capital of that State, to the astonishment and delight of a vast assembly, very few of the congregation having ever heard him before.

At Greencastle, his audience was estimated at from four thousand to five thousand. This was one of his first efforts at reading an address in

public; and though the composition and delivery were greatly extolled, I felt the disadvantage of the course to be so much against him, that in the delivery I could scarcely recognize the presence of *Bascom*, and earnestly hoped it might be his last experiment in that line.

In December following, under the pressure of his pecuniary embarrassments, he tendered his resignation to the trustees of Augusta College, hoping to find some employment that would aid in his emancipation from debt; but his resignation was not accepted, yet permission was given him to travel a considerable portion of his time, and turn his services to the best account he could for his own relief.

The tide of foreign infidelity was at this period sweeping over the city of Cincinnati like a deadly sirocco. The friends of Christianity deemed it expedient to make some effort to stay the raging pestilence. To this end, a meeting was called in the latter part of this month, (December,) at which it was resolved to invite Mr. Bascom, to deliver a course of lectures in that city, on the relative claims of Christianity and Infidelity. The invitation was given and accepted, and his friends, aware of his circumstances, resolved to admit hearers only by ticket. What the pecuniary gain of this measure was, I have not the means at hand of knowing; but the moral revenue arising from

these lectures was above price. This course of lectures was also delivered in Louisville, Kentucky, with much approbation and good effect.

Somewhere about this time, the honorary degree of D. D. was conferred on Mr. Bascom, and within a short period, the same honor was conferred by two colleges and two universities. In 1845, he also received the degree of LL. D. from La Grange College, Alabama.

About the time of closing the lectures, mentioned above, Dr. Bascom received an invitation to deliver a missionary sermon in New York, before the Young Men's Missionary Society, and for the special purpose of relieving that society from a heavy burden of a debt. The invitation was accepted, and the sermon was delivered early in the following May. From the numerous notices of that sermon, which appeared in the city papers at the time, we select only two. The first is from the note-book of the editor of the Knickerbocker:

"While we were yet in 'a state of dubiety,' whether or no his audience were not to be treated to a merely nebulous disquisition, of no particular merit, and asking, mentally, whether *this* could be the man whom Henry Clay had pronounced the greatest natural orator he had ever heard, when a brilliant thought, wreaked upon eloquent and original expression, enchained our attention; and thenceforward, to the close of the discourse, we

wist not that we were occupying a narrow spot in the middle of a crowded aisle — 'cabined, cribbed, confined, bound in' — with the thermometer at ninety. When once fully engrossed with his subject, (the progress and effects of the Christian faith, and the arguments in favor of its promulgation,) every eye in the congregation was upon the speaker, and each heart beat quicker, as the glowing thoughts dropped from his tongue. His similes are vivid and striking, to a degree; his impressions of nature, and the comparisons which he draws from her external aspects, are not minute and in detail. They are upon a noble scale — 'taking in whole continents and seas.' Such was the character of that portion of his discourse, wherein he spake of the past ages; to whom the great volume of nature was as a sealed book; who saw no God in the works of his hand; who could read the starry rythm of the heavens, survey the towering mountains, the rivers sweeping to the main; who could hear the roar of the great ocean, and the far sounding cataract, and see in all these no evidences of the Power who spake, and they existed.

"He was scarce less effective in describing the origin and spread of the Christian faith. The good seed had been sown, and for eighteen hundred years it had, in one way or another, been producing fruit. The germ expanded, and the tree had arisen

and spread, until the nations of the world sat under its branches. Efforts had often been made to root it out, and to destroy it. The lightnings of persecution had scathed it — the ax of the wicked had sought to lop its boughs — the wild boar of the forest had whetted its tusk against its time-worn trunk — yet still, in living green, it spread its inviting arms abroad, every where overshadowing evil with good. Kingdom after kingdom had arisen, flourished, and fallen. The wrecks of dead empires — the long labors of emperors and kings, of principalities and powers — had passed away on that deluge-flood of earthly grandeur ever rolling onward to the ocean of eternity; yet still afar widened the blessings of Christianity. Like the beams of the sun, each ray had radiated in separate streams of light; but they were soon swallowed up in one glad effulgence, blessing all upon whom it fell, even as the common light of heaven. These remembrances can afford the reader little save a faint idea of the general character of one or two of his positions and illustrations. The nervous style, the appropriate gesture, the beaming eye, may be imagined but must be seen to be realized. The very hesitation, which our orator occasionally manifests in making a selection from thoughts which are pressing for utterance, is in itself an essential feature of eloquence; for when the key-word unlocks the treasure, the intellectual flood rolls

on with a resistless force, the greater from having been pent up and kept back; while the speaker's language illustrates and adorns his thoughts, 'as light, streaming through colored glass, heightens the object it falls upon.' "

From another city paper we take the following:

"The missionary sermon delivered in this city on Sunday evening last, by the Rev. H. B. BASCOM, D. D., was replete with sterling reason, and startling eloquence; it exhibited a grasp of mind so far beyond the range of ordinary sermonizing, that we doubt not, among the vast multitudes who crowded and pressed against the walls of the church where the effort was delivered, without and within, there were sundry of the latter, who were not properly lifted up to the grand scope and sphere of the speaker's vision. The text, — (which if we remember rightly was, 'For our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich,') — was wrought out into a world of thought, of persuasion, of imagery, — to which MILTON himself might have listened with an applauding spirit. To those who cannot retire into that realm of the mind, which seems to open upon it the domain of immortal prophecy: — the illimitable stretch of that vastness, where the OMNIPOTENT sits clothed in light as with a garment — who are unaccustomed to entertain those views which stretch beyond this visible diurnal sphere,

or those rapt 'thoughts that wander through eternity,' — the sermon in question may have seemed too high-wrought and sublime, to sink at once upon the mind. It was a discourse, susceptible of after-influences; it left an aliment for the spirit, where it might take the nurture piecemeal, and in separate contemplation. The argument throughout, was admirably sustained, — and in its widest details would have delighted an astronomer. There was something in the progress and peroration of the effort, which frequently reminded us of the magnificent flights, the empyreal ascensions, of the celebrated MILMAN, in his happiest endeavors: a symmetrical conjunction of reason and imagination, fortifying each other, with vision and conclusion. Being spontaneous, it cannot be supposed, that one, warmed with the vastness of his theme, might not expand his similes both in number and spirit, beyond the common ken; yet, it is not in ordinary intellects to set bounds to sacred improvisation. Bending to the divine afflatus, and uplifted to the celestial Zion, who shall put bolts and bars before the spirit's rapture? No doubt it is vouchsafed to some minds, to have a wider bound of intellectual light opened upon them, than is accorded to the generality of others; and this appears to be the case with the subject under notice; his tropes and figures are not drawn from the narrowed border of this sublunary

orb; but he ascends, as it were, into an imaginary balcony, where, like him 'upon the top of Fesole, or in Val d'Arno,' he descries new systems, — points the upraised vision to a deeper phalanx of worlds on worlds, blooming in expanded beauty, and encircled with that immortal principle of life and light, whose seat and fountain is the inner sanctuary of God. One would think that the gradations from such vast contemplations, down to the subject of earthly missions, would be abrupt and incongruous — but they were not. To a succession of brilliant hypotheses, with which the exordium and centre of the discourse, were, perhaps, too replete, there followed a train of evangelical reflections, — corollary of the whole, — which abounded with true edification, and left upon the minds of the audience, the deepest and most lively impressions.

"There was a pecuniary shower afterwards among the assembly, the gross amount of which must have been very considerable, — and which will, no doubt, fully accomplish its benevolent and humanizing aim."

We must be permitted to introduce yet another notice of this discourse. It is from a religious paper of a different church from that to which Dr. Bascom belonged:

"Last evening the New York Bible Society held its anniversary at the Broadway Tabernacle. This

was the first of the anniversaries of the season, and if we may judge from the spirit of this occasion, no small treat is to be enjoyed by the attendants upon the coming celebrations. H. B. Bascom, D.D., (Methodist,) was selected speaker for the occasion; and the choice was most happy. Dr. Bascom is one of the choice spirits of the age, and well suited to elevate the public mind in its views of these great benevolent enterprises. His remarks upon the character, genius, principles, and effects of Christianity—the Bible—were incomparably eloquent and impressive. At one time we stood in the centre of the great drama of time — in the centre of the broad amphitheatre of Jehovah's creative and providential exhibitions. Language is too feeble to express the vivid conceptions that burst upon my mind, when from that centre he followed the track of sacred record — the pathway of God from the origin of things. The speaker had philosophy, but he did not deify it. *The Bible* seemed his great instructor. How forcibly the commonest incident of biblical record rose into an era under his master touch, none but those who heard him can fully conceive. I stood and gazed upon the canvas which his mighty pencil touched. I looked through the telescope which he held before the eye, and lo! the morning of existence dawned — the cradled universe kindled its infant smile under the uttered gratulations of its Maker — the

morning stars began to sing, and the sons of God shouted for joy. He lifted that telescope again, and a boundless eternity was revealed. So bold were his conceptions when he attempted an expression of eternity — and so wide, so vast, was the region that lay expanded before us, that time's epoch dwindled down to a brief hour, and the circle of the heavens narrowed to the merest point.

"Yet it was not mere flashing oratory — mere scintillations of a vivid imagination. There was a solidity, a maturity of thought unusual to a mind of his glowing order. While I was gazing upon the scenery thus spread out before me, suddenly 'the angel of prophecy passed' me, and it was difficult to continue the impression that I was listening to a description, — so much of *living reality* seemed to invest the whole scenery. The angel of prophecy lifted the curtain of time to come; revelation then shed its brilliant light over the *new scene.* You might have beheld the hill tops and mountain brows brilliant with a '*living* splendor,' 'the *outline*' of the future — affording all we need to anticipate — and leaving the intervals to be filled up by the historic pen. Down in the distance of coming ages, the gradual developments of prophecy opened before us the angry attacks of infidelity upon the Bible. Her undaunted steps, as she went on, 'hurling thunders at thrones and pronouncing the doom of nations;' her splen-

did achievements, as she rolled on her chariot over a world of broken hearts that throbbed with the first pulse of *real life* in the crush; and other mighty doings then passed in review before us — until the blended voice of the redeemed below, and the redeemed above, swelled into its highest strains when he said the entranced spirits above would 'hush their harps' and bend from the heavens to listen to the 'tones of their praise,' and the hymns of their melody."

After the services of that evening were concluded, Dr. Bascom was introduced, at the house of Dr. R., to Miss Van Antwerp, who afterwards became his wife.

After completing his engagement in behalf of the Missionary Society, it was proposed that he should repeat his lectures on Christianity and infidelity in the city. This he did with marked success. All who heard them appeared delighted, and the public press was profuse in their praise. From the multitude of notices we select but one, and that one among the most moderate of the whole:

"The second lecture of Professor Bascom, on 'The Evidences of Christianity,' will be delivered *this evening*, and not at the time accidently stated in the Inquirer of this morning. The following remarks of that paper with respect to the first lecture, deserve full endorsement, and with double emphasis, to the subsequent portions of the course.

in which the tide of evidence and argument, gathering strength as it goes on, must sweep conviction to every mind not resolved against it:

"'It was indeed a lecture worthy to have been delivered before the heads of any college or university, either in America or Europe, and as far as the argument extended, it was impossible not to be struck with the sound logical premises on which it was based, the true philosophy and religion of its doctrines, and the correctness in every point of the Professor's well-managed deduction. To the Infidel, it was a matter of conviction — to the Christian and true believer, a source of additional triumph and joy. Although, as we have already observed, the lecture only formed *one* of a series, yet it was classically correct in the detail, apparently unanswerable in reasoning, and decidedly perfect as a whole. We infer, therefore, that each lecture will present a similar monument of logical unity, symmetry and perfection. We once more urge upon our readers the advantage of attending the course, which cannot fail to improve them in the interests of religion, and elevate their conceptions of Christianity.'"

Afterwards he visited New Haven, Middletown, and other places in New England, and delivered his lectures.

Sometime in the summer, he visited Saratoga and preached. The concourse of visitors was

large, and composed of the *elite* of the country; there was no house large enough to accommodate the audience, and Dr. Bascom preached in the open air to a congregation, estimated at three thousand souls. The effort was a powerful one, and very successful in so far as the edification, and even delight of the hearers were concerned; but it brought on a bronchial affection, from the effects of which he suffered much, and from which he never entirely recovered. Of this sermon, a Saratoga correspondent of a Baltimore paper writes:

"Dr. Bascom threw himself into the field of prophecy, traced its fulfillment from the days of its utterance to the present time, with a clearness that seemed to excite universal admiration; and his analogies were, to the mind, like the bright sun beam, darting vividly through the broken cloud of the morning, to the eye. Not a whisper could be heard, and all, save the speaker's voice, were wrapt in the mantle of silence. The visions of his imagination seem bright and quick as the comet's flight; and he takes the mind of the listener, as it were, from the groveling sphere to which the animal man is confined, and mounting aloft, lays the very court of heaven open to its vision, whilst the caverns of the darker regions are beheld yawning beneath. He carries it imperceptibly, through the untrodden fields of illimitable space, while the millenial sun is mentally seen to

rise, and throw an unbroken sheet of light, and heavenly purity over the inhabitants of the spheres. I wish I had time to study a description of his powers."

About this time he was offered a general agency of the American Colonization Society, at a salary of three thousand dollars a year. This was highly complimentary under the circumstances; for that society was allowing agents *contingently* from five hundred to one thousand dollars; but having tested the value of Dr. Bascom's services in that capacity, they believed that the interests of the society would be promoted by employing him at even this high salary. Circumstances, however, rendered it expedient in his judgment, to decline the liberal offer.

On his return to New York, from Saratoga, his symptoms were such as to alarm his medical advisors, and he was directed to spend the ensuing winter as far south, at least, as Virginia.

He started southward accordingly; but the desperate state of his affairs was such, that he felt compelled to labor for the replenishing of his finances, even at the cost of health and the peril of life. He lectured in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and other cities on his route, until he reached Petersburg, Va., where he entirely failed and had to desist.

He always lectured three nights in succession;

and frequently on the following morning after lecturing, he rose voiceless and prostrated, and only by fomentations and hot drinks, recovered himself through the day for another struggle at night.*

Why did he submit to this distressing and

* The low state of Dr. Bascom's health, and the apparent probability that he would not recover, gave rise to a rumor, that he was actually dead, and this report soon spread through the newspapers. Below we give the rumor in one of its forms, with the remarks of the editor.

We have learned from an authentic source, that the Rev. HENRY B. BASCOM, that brightest light of the Methodist Episcopal Church, nay, of the whole Catholic Church, is no more! We understand that he died in Virginia, on his way westward, but the particulars of this melancholy event have not yet reached us.

"The language of eulogy is too feeble, in our mouth, at least, to give vent to the feelings with which this loss has overpowered us. We can only remember what he was, and imagine what he is, — a star of exceeding brightness added to the brilliant cluster in heaven."

"His loss to the church must be irreparable; we know it to be so to the Union at large, out of whose midst A GREAT MAN has been taken, — one GREAT, indeed, in the legitimate sense of that term, mighty in intellect, wise to direct, and powerful to execute the glorious warfare in which he was engaged.

We are not a member of any church, but, in this event, we can sympathize fully with its members. We, too, can pay the tribute which affection and veneration owe to the memory of one, who cultivated assiduously the finest endowments with which nature can invest mortality, (for, surely, such were his,) and who esteemed it his highest privilege to be permitted to devote them all to the service of the GREAT FIRST CAUSE by whom they were bestowed."

"The New York Commercial notices the rumor, but pleasantly assures his contemporary that "Although the eloquent divine is not dead, yet something very *serious* will happen to him very soon." To which a Baltimore paper responds — "We have no doubt of it; for it is confidently expected that about March, he will be converted from — *bachelorism!* a consummation devoutedly to be wished."

perilous course? Because the benevolence of his heart had led him to contract a debt for the benefit of others, under the weight of which he was now crushed to the earth; and rather than allow his creditors, or the cause of God to suffer through his delinquency, he put his valuable life in jeopardy.*

But why was this suffered? why this state of things not prevented by the wealthy members of the church? I know of no better reason than that Christians set a less value on the services of the most talented and faithful ministers of their religion, than men of the world place on eminent statesmen and politicians. In England vast sums were bestowed on Pitt, Burke, and others, by wealthy individuals, in consideration of their public services. In our own country, a large sum was

* Dr. Bascom's language on this subject, addressed to his betrothed in a letter, some months previous, to his marriage, is too expressive of his feelings and his situation to be omitted.

He says — "I must provide for my family — [his father's] for the payment of a portion of my debts, and see that my remaining creditors are satisfied — these are imperative matters, and may require my presence for a year or two. Be assured, however, my dear E, — I shall not take you to Kentucky, if I see that you are to suffer by it, or be subjected to humiliation. You will perceive, that on this subject, I am a good deal feverish and distracted. If I fail in Baltimore, I have no hope of success, and must give up all hope of the immediate relief for which I sigh." His intended wife, sympathizing in his difficulties, kindly offered him a sum of money, to relieve the present press. To this tender of aid he responds — "Your kind offer, my dear E., — to assist me in my difficulties, was like yourself, and makes me more proud of you, and love you the more, but with my present views, I cannot accept it. The amount, it is true, would greatly relieve me, still, my dear girl, I must

given to Henry Clay, to relieve him of embarrassment, and to Daniel Webster, to provide for the comfort of his old age, because they had rendered distinguished service to their country or their political party. To this I make no objection; but why are Christians less generous in providing for distinguished and needy ministers? Had Bascom devoted his great talents to politics, certainly he could not have been as useful as in the higher and holier sphere of action, in which he moved; yet, no one doubts his ability to have taken rank with Clay, Webster and Calhoun, had he selected the same field; and in that case too, there is hardly room to doubt that Bascom the *Statesman* had been liberally provided for, while Bascom the *Christian orator* was permitted to suffer under perpetual

decline your tender. I might die, and although a note might be evidence of my indebtedness, yet my effects might not be equal to the claims against me, and you be the sufferer. No: let me try to extricate myself in some other way. It bids fair to be vain, I know, but still let me try. Let me have the consciousness of having done all that hope could prompt to, or desperation suggest, and then, even with the iron hand of poverty at my throat, I can breathe more freely." * * * * "The sameness of my topics must be a tax on your forbearance; but when a man writes from prison, what topics can he discuss, unconnected with the darkness of his cell contrasted with the excluded light of heaven? It may not always be so. If it is, it shall not be my fault."

Speaking of his physical sufferings while on this same tour, he says, — "If you were with me, my dear E., — this dreadful exhaustion, and this painful throat might be more tolerable, as it is, I have seldom been more utterly outdone. These efforts have cost me dearly, very dearly. In my life, perhaps, I have never had such a struggle to keep up."

embarrassment for the means of meeting his debts of humanity and benevolence. And is it not almost certain that those very *Christians* who allowed him to suffer and languish unaided, as a gospel minister, would have come promptly to his rescue, had he been an embarrassed statesman? This is a painful theme; for the writer, with a most intimate acquaintance with his feelings and deep mental sufferings on this account, is strongly impressed with the conviction that his distressing embarrassment hastened his death; and that but for this cause, he had in all probability been living, laboring, and honoring the church at this day. In his last serious illness before the one that terminated his earthly career, his physicians pronounced mental anxiety to be the prime cause of his disease; and in his last illness, the desperate state of his affairs, the gloomy prospect of leaving his creditors unpaid, and his loved little ones dependent on the charity of a cold, unfeeling world, so wrought on his spirits as to give much additional power to a disease, which under favorable circumstances would probably have yielded to remedial agencies. But we turn from reflections so gloomy, and now unavailing.

CHAPTER XIX.

Improves in Health, returns to New York and Marries — Why did he not Marry earlier, and disembarrass himself? — Why Marry now under Embarrassments? — Leaves New York with his Lady, and visits Philadelphia, Baltimore, Pittsburg, and finally Augusta — Heavy Draught on his Funds — Manner of Life and Prospect — Elected President of Louisiana College, which he Declines — Tendered Presidency of Missouri University, also Declined — Elected to General Conference of 1840 — Important Position Assigned him — Overture from Transylvania University — Action of Conference—Dr. Bascom a Commissioner—Tender of Morrison College to Kentucky Conference—Commissioners meet and accept the College — The Source of a Difficulty Transferring only a College when a *University* was understood — Bascom appointed President *pro tem.* of University — Services and Compensation at Augusta — (Note) — Germ of Future Difficulties developing — College opened under new Organization, and is very Successful — Comparative Prosperity shown — (Note) — College Property incumbered — Efforts to Relieve it — Death of Dr. Bascom's Stepmother — Dr. Bascom a Delegate to the General Conference of 1844—On account of Difficulties on the Slavery Question, declines as Chairman of Commissioners, to report the acquisition of the College — Is elected Permanent President of University — Is Chairman of Education Committee in General Conference — Gets into a Political Difficulty, the History of which is given.

AFTER Dr. Bascom had somewhat recruited his health by rest, he returned to the city of New York, and on the seventh of March 1839 was married to Miss Van Antwerp, by Rev. Fitch Reed.

"But why did he not, long before this date, marry a lady of fortune, and so relieve himself of

pecuniary difficulties?"* This question has often been asked, and can be easily answered. He regarded matrimony as too sacred a thing to be influenced and directed by pecuniary and sordid considerations: He was too high-minded and of too independent a spirit to place himself in a state of entire dependence on a lady whose hand he should solicit in wedlock: He could hardly expect to find any lady who would perfectly sympathize with him, and bestow her means in support of those dependent on his bounty. No man appreciated the blessing of social life and domestic relations more highly than Dr. Bascom, but his sense of duty to those committed to his care induced him, until this late period in life, to forego this enjoyment.

"But why marry now, with all his difficulties still pressing upon him?" It had come to be high time for him to take this step, if it was ever to be

* A letter, written a short time before his marriage, contains views of matrimony so just, as to warrant a brief extract. "Although many a dark cloud skirts my horizon, yet, with God's blessing, and your love I hope to have *some* fair sky at least, to bless the future. In this, my dear E., much will depend on you. If I should be disappointed in marriage, of all men I should be most miserable; but my anticipations include no such result. Let us resolve to be contented and happy, and this resolve will contribute much to make us so. Why should we not be happy? I shall have much care and affliction on account of my family, and so, perhaps, will you; but happiness on earth implies no exemption from affliction and trial. To meet these and triumph, in peace with heaven — not enslaved to earth — and with true and unchanging devotion to each other in weal or woe, this is the only happiness we can hope for, and, my dearest girl, for it let us hope."

taken at all; — his betrothed, understanding his circumstances, was willing to share his lot with him; she had means to place herself above dependence, and these he secured to her, legally, without her knowledge, that so she might not suffer seriously from his embarrassments; — and, finally, he had realized about three thousand dollars as the proceeds of his lecturing, and this sum would afford him some present relief: and hope promised a more prosperous future.

Soon after their marriage, Dr. Bascom and his lady started for the west. They spent some time in Philadelphia, and in Baltimore, and then proceeded to Pittsburg, where Mrs. Bascom was left with Mrs. Bell — Dr. Bascom's niece and adopted daughter — until he went to Augusta to make arrangements for her reception. He procured a habitation for his step-mother and family, repaired his own, and on the last night of April, 1839, Mrs. Bascom was installed mistress of her Kentucky home.

When Dr. Bascom left his wife at Pittsburg he had three thousand and five hundred dollars; — when, three or four weeks afterwards, she joined him at Augusta, he had but one hundred and fifty dollars of that sum left. But the payment of this sum relieved the present press. He wrought his own garden, kept but one servant, had two boarders, — his wife took the active management of house-

hold affairs, and the present was more happy, and the future more bright than heretofore.

In 1840 Dr. Bascom was elected President of the Louisiana College, located at Jackson. To this office was attached a salary of three thousand dollars per annum; but whether his dependents and creditors, the want of harmony among the Trustees, the unwillingness of Augusta to lose his services, or whether these with other reasons induced his declinature, I am not prepared to say; what is certainly known is that he did not accept the appointment.

Within the the same same year he was *semi*-officially invited to the Presidency of the University of Missouri; — that is, he was requested by a Committee of the Board of Trustees to permit his name to be put in nomination before the Board for that office. As he had declined a more eligible Presidency after having been elected to it, he of course declined entering the lists as a candidate and competitor for this.

Dr. Bascom was this year again elected to the General Conference, where he was a member of the standing committee on slavery, and chairman of a special committee raised with reference to a particular branch of the same subject. The confidence of the episcopacy in his ability to manage this unpleasant and difficult subject, induced a portion, at least, of the Episcopal board, to request

him to make a general report, based on that particular case. This report will be brought into notice elsewhere in this work, and needs not to be called up here.

At this conference, a communication was received from the Trustees of Transylvania University, intimating an intention on the part of that body to tender the control of the institution to the Methodist Episcopal Church. The conference, therefore, appointed a board of commissioners to represent them in this important business; and Dr. Bascom was a member of that commission, and acted as chairman of the board. The resolution of the conference on this subject, provided that "the commissioners should have authority to make any arrangement with the trustees of the university by which they may secure to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the control of said university, in so far as to provide that it [the General Conference] shall elect the faculty and officers thereof, and arrange and settle the course of studies pursued therein, and the internal policy thereof, through any board of curators which the conference may appoint for that purpose; and provided they do not pledge the property of the Methodist Episcopal Church, nor bind this conference, either collectively, or the members individually, to pay any money, either to endow or sustain said university. And said com-

missioners shall have power to carry into immediate effect any arrangement they may make with said trustees, in conformity with the foregoing stipulations, and they shall report their actings and doings herein to the next session of this conference.

In the autumn of 1841, the trustees of the University sent one of their number to the session of the Kentucky annual conference — within the bounds of which it is situated — to apprize that body, that they were ready to make a tender of Morrison College — the academic department of the university — to the commissioners, and to get a pledge of co-operation and support from that body. The conference had no power to accept the offer in behalf of the church, but they approved the measure, and gave a qualified pledge of support.

In the spring of 1842, the commissioners met, and formally accepted the offer of the trustees, and resolved to take possession in the following autumn.

Here, it appears to me, a blunder was committed at the outset of this negotiation, the effects of which were disastrous to the enterprise. The control of Transylvania *University* appears to have been proposed to the General Conference; the conference appointed commissioners to receive a *University*, but instead of this, only Morrison College, which was but one of three colleges composing the university, was finally tendered and accepted. A

university, under the control of the church, would probably have enlisted a number of conferences in its support — perhaps, all the south; but not so a mere college, of which there were already many under the control of the annual conferences, and to the support of some one or other of these, nearly every annual conference in the connection was already pledged. Those conferences could, therefore, have no adequate motive to withdraw their support from their own colleges at home, to give it to a mere college at a distance. Had the *University* been put under the control of the church, there had been the object of giving our sons a literary and a professional education in the same university, and that a church institution. True, the church had the appointing of a President, who was not only President of Morrison College, but of the entire university; yet, even he, had little or no other authority over the Law and Medical departments, than simply to deliver diplomas to those designated by the trustees of the university. These explanations, and others, are necessary to a right understanding of Dr. Bascom's connection with, and relation to that institution.

The commissioners proposed Dr. Bascom for the the presidency of Transylvania, but he declined; yet, rather than defeat the enterprise, he, at length, yielded his reluctant consent, so far as to become President *pro tem.*

Under this arrangement, he resigned his chair in Augusta College, and removed to Lexington.* This was a highly responsible, and, in many respects, most unpleasant position. The principle just now noticed at once began its workings; there was a college already under the care of the Kentucky conference, and there were those who were not willing to abandon the old college for the new. The majority, however, were ready to pledge support to the newly acquired institution, and were desirous to withdraw the endowment funds of the conference from Augusta, and appropriate them at Lexington.

This attempt brought on a series of vexatious

* When Dr. Bascom resigned his chair in Augusta College, he was, by some, much censured, and the charge of ingratitude was brought against him, as if that institution had conferred on him such large favors as to bind him in everlasting gratitude to it. To this charge he replied, that he had served for as little as seven hundred dollars a year, and at no time more than one thousand dollars, and never in any one year received more than half his salary in cash, and seldom so much — that "for the last six sessions he had received only one dollar in five of his salary in money — that on going there, he relinquished a salary of fifteen hundred dollars, and often during his stay, had offers worth twice, thrice, and even quadruple what they gave him — that he had paid for the institution several hundred dollars, in donations, subscriptions, traveling expenses, &c. Add to this sixteen hundred dollars, paid or to be paid for board, tuition, &c., of students without funds, sent to his care." "My expenses in eleven years have exceeded my income by at least five thousand dollars. All this went to the college and the place, and is a larger amount by more than a thousand dollars, than I have received in cash from the trustees of the college in all my life. And yet I am charged with ingratitude."

and prolonged law suits; and, in all these, Dr. Bascom had to bear the chief burden of toil, and no small expense, as well of money as of time; and no man could suffer more from the annoyance of such things than he.

The General Conference had prohibited the commissioners from appropriating any church funds to the support of the institution, and the trustees, therefore, had nothing to expect from that quarter; but the Kentucky conference become pledged to procure students, to endow one professorship, and to bring over their Augusta funds, provided they could be recovered.

The first they did for a time most handsomely, the second they but half accomplished, and in the third they did not succeed at all.

The college was opened, however, and under Bascom's administration it was, for some years, eminently successful; seven professors and tutors were employed, and by the end of the second year the catalogue had swelled from some twenty or thirty to near three hundred.*

* To learn the happy influenee of this transfer, on the prosperity of the Institution, it is only neeessary to present official statements of its condition before and after that event. It was opened under the new organization, September or October, 1842. At or about the opening of the preeeding session, the trustees reported to the State Legislature, that the annual ineome of the eollege was five thousand two hundred and twenty dollars, that its expenditures were six thousand two hundred and twenty-two dollars, and that the whole amount of tuition fees received for instruction for the preceding year in Morrison College

Presently it transpired that there was a mortgage lien on the college premises of some five or six thousand dollars, which must be immediately discharged; the buildings, too, were much out of repair, and funds must be raised for both purposes. To meet the emergency, Bascom and a few friends borrowed money, and paid off the mortgage, and an agent was sent out to collect money to pay the loan and make necessary repairs. Some funds were secured, and some repairs paid for, and something paid on the interest of the loan, but Bascom and his colleagues of the faculty had a large sum to pay from their own pockets for repairs, and the loan stood unliquidated. Still the college halls were thronged with students, and never had it a higher reputation.

In the early part of the year 1842, Dr. Bascom's step-mother, who had been provided for and nursed by him for nine years, departed this life. On the occurring of this event he incorporated the remaining members of his father's family into his own, and continued to be a father, as well as brother, to them so long as they had need of his guardianship and providence.

was but four hundred and forty dollars — that is *eleven* paying students in the college proper — and six hundred and thirty dollars for tuition in the preparatory department. In two years from that time the college — including preparatory department — presented a catalogue of *two hundred and eighty-one students*; and still a year later, of *two hundred and ninety.*

In 1844, Dr. Bascom was, as usual, a delegate to the General Conference, and as chairman of the board of commissioners, it became his duty, by the terms of his appointment, to report to that body, the action had in relation to the college, that the conference might appoint officers for it, as stipulated in the resolution of 1840. Difficulties, however, arose between the North and the South, and fearing the appointment, under the existing excitement, of unacceptable officers, and of unpleasant conflicts, he doubted the expediency of presenting the institution to the conference. The southern delegates took the same view of the subject, and signed a written pledge to sustain him in his proposed course, and accordingly he made no report of what the commissioners had done.

Up to this time Dr. Bascom had looked forward to the General Conference, as the time when a permanent president of the university would be appointed, and he should be released from that onerous burden: but on his return home, the trustees, highly approving of his course, promptly elected him president permanently.

At this General Conference, Dr. Bascom was placed at the head of the committee on education; but as the difficulties which grew up in the conference on the subject of slavery threatened, early in the session, to work a severance of the connection,

while it was deemed inexpedient to bring the affairs of Transylvania before that body, it was judged unnecessary, if not improper, to make any general report respecting the literary institutions of the church — leaving each division to manage its own literary interests.

During this year, Dr. Bascom became involved, most unexpectedly, in a very unpleasant affair. Col. Polk and Mr. Clay were rival candidates for the Presidency of the United States,—the contest was not only warm, but bitter and violent, and every expedient or stratagem that promised success, was unscrupuously employed by demagogues and party leaders of both parties. The private character of Mr. Clay was violently assailed, and a gentleman in the east wrote to Dr. Bascom, whom he knew to be a neighbor, and friend of Mr. Clay, —for a frank statement as to his moral character. However defective this may have been at an earlier period, Dr. Bascom firmly believed it to be, at that time, entirely unimpeachable, and such was the general opinion; indeed, it was not long after this that he regularly connected himself with the church. With the assurance that his answer was intended for no public use, Dr. B. expressed his opinion with the freedom of private correspondence, and perhaps with some coloring of partiality, supposing the matter would end there. Soon, however, the substance of his letter was published

in the political papers in Mr. Clay's interest; this excited some of the other party against him extremely, and he was denounced in libels the most false and scandalous, and for the first and only time in his life, his own moral character was impeached to invalidate his testimony. But he suffered the slanderers to go unprosecuted — though he might have recovered exemplary damages for the slander; rightly judging that such missiles could make no general or permanent impression on a character established and built up by long years of upright conduct, and indefatigable devotion to his sacred calling. True, he regretted that he had not been more cautious in his remarks, and so avoided this persecution; but as he had acted from no improper motive, he was content to abide the issue.*

* As this letter was the occasion of bitter prejudice against Dr. Bascom in the minds of many, and some who, perhaps, have never fully understood the facts of the case, it may be no more than sheer justice to his character to place the matter in its true light. And first, we give the published statement of his enemies as to the contents of the letter, and also a most ridiculously false report of Dr. Bascom's personal history, and his relations with Mr. Clay.

"The Rev. Henry B. Bascom, who emigrated from this section some years ago, has recently, we see, been certifying for the 'Hon. H. Clay.' First, he certifies that 'Mr. Clay offers no claim to Christian piety,' but asserts that the charges against him of being a duellist, a gambler, &c., are 'utterly and basely false.' That 'in view of the ordinary accredited principles of good moral character, no charge can be brought against him, without violating the obligations of truth and sound justice.' Let it be borne in mind that this Rev. H. B. Bascom went to Kentucky as an adventurer, poor and without

friends: that Mr. Clay, finding him possessed of rare parts, took him under his care and protection, educated him, and *made a minister of him:* that he bears a reputation, over the Union, as a very eloquent, though wordy and windy pulpit orator: that through Mr. Clay's influence he was elected chaplain to the lower house of Congress in 1841, and subsequently, through the same influence, was placed at the head of the Transylvania University, at Lexington, Ky., and we shall then have a clue to the strong feelings that induced the reverend gentleman to certify to that which every man in the United States knows to be false. It is but a short time since we heard a distinguished member of the church of which Mr. Bascom is, we fear, an unworthy minister, assert at a public meeting, that every man, woman, and child in Kentucky, knew that Henry Clay was a gambler."

In this short extract are at least seven or eight palpable falsehoods, having not even a shadow of foundation in truth. But here follows the beautiful sequel:

"We will close by giving the reader one more glimpse at the ministerial character of Rev. H. B. Bascom. Some fifteen years ago, when we resided in Delaware county, N. Y., a gentleman informed us that Mr. Bascom, whom he spoke of as one of the most eloquent preachers in the United States, had written a letter to his old friend, P. S. Preston, Esq., in which he spoke of visiting the Beechwoods, and was particular in inquiring that, if in case he visited that section he should find any '*girls that would be come-at-able?*' This, in the 'parlance' of a clergyman, sounded beautifully at the time, and, we recollect, was a subject of very general remark in the neighborhood."

Another paper, after quoting the last paragraph above, says:

"T. J. Hubbell, Esq., says he read the letter of Mr. Bascom to Mr. Preston, and remembers the phrase '*come-at-able*' was underscored to make it emphatic, and that he has had a rather poor opinion of Dr. Bascom as a minister ever since, though he (Mr. Hubbell) is a member of the Methodist Church. The whigs have placed themselves in an awkward position by denying the truth of our statement, as it is virtually admitting that what we have said was enough, if true, to destroy all confidence in the truth of Mr. Bascom's certificate for 'Hon. H. Clay.'"

The same paper, of a later date, speaking of the matter, and of this Mr. H., says:

"At the county meeting on Tuesday evening, he (Mr. H.) incidentally alluded to the Bascom letter, to P. S. Preston, Esq. He fully

endorsed our statement about it in the Herald: said he saw the letter, and read it, and laughed over it, with Paul S. Preston himself: and assured his auditors that Preston would never deny to him that there was such language in the letter as was printed in the Herald."

Dr. Bascom was here charged in a public newspaper with gross falsehood — and copied into many others — and the most foul and damning imputation was attempted to be cast on his fair fame by dark, insidious insinuation. Political editors declared it sufficient to destroy his credibility as a witness, and a member of his own communion publicly asserted the truth of the charge, and declared that it had caused him to have "a poor opinion of Mr. Bascom ever since." The boldness of the aspersion made some of Dr. B.'s friends fear the possibility of some youthful indiscretion on his part as the ground of it. Dr. Bascom wrote to Mr. Preston, in answer to a request of the latter, authorizing the publication of his letter on which the calumny was ostensibly based, and says:

"The article from the 'Herald,' to which you direct my attention, *is a tissue of the most stupid falsehoods*, and so far as I am concerned, *there is not one word of truth in it.* For example, I left the place of my birth more than thirty-six years ago, and instead of coming to Kentucky an 'adventurer,' was only twelve years old when my father and family emigrated westward. It is also true, that I had been a regular minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church for at least eight years, and as such had filled some of the most important stations in the West, before Mr. Clay *had ever seen me.* Equally true is it, and Mr. Clay will attest it with more pleasure than I affirm it, that I *never was indebted to Mr. Clay to the amount of a cent in my life*, and my only obligations to him are on the score of friendship and good will, to the utter exclusion of every thing implying either bounty or patronage, and the other charges of the Herald are equally false and defamatory, besides being too obviously absurd and malignant to do me any harm, even where I am not known. That portion of the political press which has stooped to the infamy of lying and misrepresentation to injure a man, who had not interfered with the rights and functions of the press in any form, and had merely exercised the right of private judgment, on a question of social justice, between man and man, has deprived itself of the power of injuring me, and by a resort to such means, has superseded the necessity of even a defence on my part. The statement of Hubbell is a *sheer fabrication*, and with the meaning he intends to convey, an *unqualified falsehood*, and no man on earth knows it better than the very convenient

witness, who, for merely political party purposes, has lent himself to the guilt and shame of becoming its author.

"You are at liberty to publish my letter of 1823, to which Hubbell refers, and with it this note, should you deem it necessary. Your letter, to which mine of 2d September, 1823, was a familiar reply, is preserved, but among a file of several thousand letters. I cannot now, lay my hand upon it."

The offensive letter was published, and the whole matter turned out to be no more than this — that more than twenty years previously Mr. P. had written to his old school fellow, Bascom, inviting him to visit his native place, — rallying him playfully on the subject of matrimony, &c. With the unsuspicious freedom of friendship, Bascom replies, saying he is still unmarried, but intends to marry at some time — purposes to visit his place of nativity, &c., and adds — "If I should reach Delaware in 'single wretchedness,' will I see any body there worth *having*, and *come-at-able by a romantic stranger?* or shall I please myself here among the fine Kentucky belles?"

It was a most malicious attack; but simple truth wrought a powerful re-action. Bascom stood vindicated and pure before the world, while his slanderers were left to settle their account with abused conscience, an indignant public, and a just God.

CHAPTER XX.

Southern Convention meets, 1845 — Dr. Bascom at the Head of the most important Committee — Action of that Body rerpecting the University — Dr. Bascom's Diary in 1846 — General Conference — Bascom supported for Bishop — Causes of Failure — The College accepted by General Conference — Bascom re-elected President — Difficulties for him in re-organization — College begins to languish under new Arrangement — Dr. Bascom elected Editor of new Quarterly Review — Commissioner to look after the Church Property in dispute — Difficulties of his three offices, and his Private Affairs — Plan for relieving the last — Partly Successful — He attends the Northern General Conference in 1848 — Resigns the Presidency.

In 1845 the Southern Convention met in Louisville, Ky., and formed a separate ecclesiastical organization. Of this body, Dr. Bascom was a member — and the most effective one in it, as will be seen elsewhere — but the assembly was not of such character as to have authority to consummate the connection between the college and the southern church; yet, by way of manifesting their favor to the measure, they recommended to the annual conferences, to "instruct their delegates in the General Conference of 1846, to take such action as shall consummate the proposed connection between the Trustees of Transylvania University and the General Conference, and adopt it as *the university* of the Methodist Episcopal Church

South." Here we have again the misleading idea, that the institution was to become the one great *university* of the Southern Methodist Church, around which the whole connection should rally. I do not suppose, that the trustees intended to deceive the conference, but the latter, not looking thoroughly into the nature and bearings of the proposed connection, were, to a great extent, misled by the name.

At three periods only of Dr. Bascom's public life did he keep a diary,—the first, on his first entering into the ministry, when his yet undeveloped powers attracted but little attention; the second on his tour to Niagara in 1829, and the third, when he had passed his culminating point, and had little to record beside the monotonous routine of college labor, and the mental perplexities, and bodily ails which beset him. The last extends only from the first of January, 1846, to the fourth of May of the same year. Bare of incident as this record is, we shall take a few extracts from it.

"January 1. In deep affliction. My child — second son — Louis Reèce, extremely ill and not expected to live.

"January 5. At half past three o'clock death triumphed. The lovely little sufferer is gone. 7th. Find myself unable to adjust thoughts or feelings to the loss of my child. 9th. No abatement of grief and gloom."

On the twentieth and twenty-second he mentions complaints brought privately against some of the faculty for neglect of duty and want of harmony, but hopes to overcome the difficulty.

"January 27. Sick, and taking medicine. Still keep up my habit of reading and writing some ten hours in the twenty-four. Jan. 28. Anxiously engaged in adjusting pecuniary difficulties.

"February 2. Complaints against my worthy compeers of the faculty increase in a certain quarter. Rather than incommode them, or have difficulty with them, I shall resign.

"February 3. Am urged by many friends to allow my name to be used in view of an election to the Episcopacy. Have uniformly declined, for various reasons.

"February 4. My long indisposition has assumed the character of a bilious intermittent, combined with a neuralgic affection, involving the nerves of the spine. I have a paroxysm of almost unendurable pain once in each twenty-four hours, usually lasting about six hours."

Though suffering with disease, and pressed with college duties, he yet added other labors to those of his office. On the 9th he says:—"I am still prosecuting my examination of the great slavery and abolition question. Have sent to an abolition depository for all the English and American publications on the subject.

"February 15. As is my daily wont, read several chapters in the holy scriptures. 16th. Usually read more than a hundred pages in one or more authors every day." And this when he was overburdened with college labor, and when he says:—"I am still grappling with disease."

"February 18. Much afflicted and deeply anxious about college affairs. Grave complaints continue to reach me, and although I am exempted from their application, I shall have the whole burden to bear."

On the 25th the college adjourned for vacation, and immediately Dr. Bascom had to put himself under medical treatment. For some time the record presents only a report of his extreme sufferings, and his constant efforts to labor on in the midst of all. Whenever not wholly confined to bed he was busily employed in reading and writing.

March 13th he says:—"My physicians ascribe my disease to mental anxiety." On the 23rd he says:—"Three hundred grains of calomel with the usual auxiliaries have scarcely touched my liver;" but on the 30th he says:—"Better to-day than for two months, and the first day in seventy-five I have not taken medicines."

"April 17 Attended an important meeting of the trustees—saw the signs and indices of changes deemed necessary by the Board to the welfare of

the university. Tendered my resignation, which the Board declined receiving, and requested I would not name the matter to any one."

Here we see still additional difficulties growing up in Dr. Bascom's path. The trustees indicated, confidentially, the changes they desired; this measure would involve the displacement of some of his friends of the faculty, and though required by the Board, the whole blame would rest on him, as he had said. To avoid this unpleasant consequence, he promptly tendered his resignation. This, of course, the Board declined accepting, for they well knew that Bascom's reputation had attracted many students, and under his administration the concern had enjoyed a higher prosperity than for many years before, and they were, therefore, unwilling to risk the consequences of his separation from the university. And he, knowing the same thing, was unwilling to take the responsibility of deserting his unenviable post against the expressed will of the trustees. He had, therefore, no alternative left but to carry out the instructions of the Board, one part of which was, that as the institution was intended to be the concern of the whole church, it should be officered by professors representing different sections of the country.

On the 20th of April, in company with Dr. Winans and his early friend, McMahan, with others, he left Lexington for Petersburg, Virginia,

the seat of the General Conference, and spent the next Sabbath in Baltimore. 29th, he says, "Went to Washington, and in the evening had a long interview with some fifteen members of Congress, on the subject of the great interests involved in the controversy between the North and the South, on the subject of slavery."

I have by me a letter from a distinguished southern man — now no more — advising Bascom of the time and place of holding that meeting. The design of this meeting was not to invoke the aid or sympathy of southern politicians, but rather to put them in possession of the true position of the southern church in relation to the laws of the south, regulating the relations of master and servant.

On the 30th, Dr. Bascom traveled to Petersburg, and the 1st of May the General Conference met.

May 2d. "Bp. A. and southern delegates — absent yesterday — having arrived, conference proceeded to business, adopting rules of order, appointment committees, and providing for the publication of their proceedings — a great deal of speaking to very little purpose. 3d. Heard sermons by Dr. Capers, Dr. G. F. Pierce, and Rev. W M. Wightman. 4th. Conference progressed in its preliminary business, without doing anything of much importance. I am staying at the house of D'Arcy Paul, Esq." This is the last diary record he

appears ever to have made; and for this, rather than its own importance, it is inserted.

At this conference, it was determined to create two new bishops. Bascom stood in the foremost rank, as a man of superior talents and devotion to the interests of the church; he had also been thrown into the forefront of the battle, which commenced at the General Conference of 1844, and had been made the subject of more unkind remark and bitter reflection, than any other man of the southern church. Many of his friends, therefore, thought that the church ought to manifest her appreciation of his talents, services, and persecutions in her cause, and her confidence in him, by electing him to the episcopacy. He did not desire the office, and had he then been elected would almost certainly have resigned without being ordained; yet, such an expression of confidence would have sustained him at a time when, in other quarters, strong efforts were being made to destroy such confidence, and to depreciate him to the greatest possible extent.

Many of those, however, who would have supported him, believing that he would not serve, if elected, gave their suffrages a different direction, while others resolved to vote for him at all hazards, willing he should resign, and more willing that he should serve. Thus, it naturally enough came to pass, that he received a number of votes, but not

enough to elect him. This was the very evil that he feared above all others, in the case. Had he not been voted for at all, it might have been supposed that it was because he refused; but to appear as a candidate, by being voted for, and so put it into the power of his adversaries to say that he sought the office, but his southern friends had not confidence in him, and rejected his claims; this was a source of deep mortification to his feelings.

His feelings were communicated confidentially to a friend or two; yet, he put on no airs, nor made any public demonstration of chagrin, but, like a man of sense, went forward in doing the work assigned him, as if nothing had conflicted with his wishes.

When the Transylvania business came up, the offer of the trustees was accepted, and in accordance with their instructions, or at least their wish, all the professorships in the literary department were considered as vacant, to be filled with men from different localities. Dr. Bascom was re-elected president; G. F. Pierce, D. D., of Georgia, vice president; and Mr. Barker, of Pennsylvania, to the chair of languages; leaving the other chairs to be filled by the curators.

Here was more trouble for Bascom; his friends and colleagues were ejected from their places, not by his seeking, but by the action of the General

Conference, following the suggestions of the trustees; yet well he knew that the burden of blame would fall on his head. And so it proved; for one or more of the discarded professors, thinking their labors and sacrifices deserved a better reward, and charging all their misfortunes in the matter to Dr. Bascom's account, became exceedingly inimical to him, and openly hostile to the institution. He was even threatened with impeachment before his conference; yet he was under an injunction of secrecy, and might not disclose the hidden agencies by which the result was brought about. All the persecution and mental perplexity cast on Dr. Bascom by this change, had not even the redeeming advantage of working any good for the college, for under the new arrangement it soon became less prosperous than under the old. What though they had elected professors from Georgia, and Pennsylvania, and Louisiana — Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Louisiana had Methodist colleges of their own to support, and all the eloquence of all the agents appointed to travel through the southern church, could not make the people see how they were to be benefited by neglecting their home colleges, to patronize a *mere* college in Kentucky, even though a man from their own state might be the incumbent of one of its chairs.

The General Conference provided for the establishment of a Southern Methodist Quarterly, and

elected Dr. Bascom its editor. He was also appointed one of the commissioners on the part of the South to settle our difficulties with the North, respecting a division of the joint property.

He had now a burden of labor, care and responsibility, resting on him sufficiently heavy to crush almost any man, physically and mentally — the colleges, the Quarterly, the commissionership, and his own personal affairs. In the college and *for* it he labored indefatigably — performed the duties of instruction and government, sought out the most competent agents and sent them in quest of funds, procured students, and gave his personal responsibility for the payment of its debts; but all would not avail; outside of Kentucky no one could feel interested in giving money to sustain it, and within that state there was evidently less responsibility felt, and therefore less effort, because it was nominally an institution of the whole church, and the people there could not see why *they* alone should support a college belonging alike to the church throughout the south.

The Quarterly was an untried experiment, and without funds to pay for suitable articles, without writers to contribute gratuitously, and without leisure to make up the whole work of his own productions, he found it exceedingly difficult to fill the work with acceptable matter; and to fill it as he wished — impossible.

The duties of the commissionership, too, he found laborious and perplexing in a high degree. He had to write many letters, consult with his colleagues, make repeated journeys to the east, visit the Northern General Conference, employ counsel, write and publish an extensive exposition of the whole affair, etc.

In the meantime, his pecuniary affairs were becoming so desperate, that immediate temporal ruin appeared inevitable. The cancer that consumed his vitals, was carefully concealed from even his friends, and few, therefore, had any idea of the nature and extent of his involvements.

In the winter of 1846–7, an observant friend, lodging in the same apartment with him, detected indications of deep mental inquietude — sought, and finally found the cause of it in the hopeless condition of his financial affairs, and set about devising the means of present relief. Through his agency, a nominal loan was procured from a number of southern gentlemen, in sums of five hundred dollars and less, the whole amounting to some fifteen thousand dollars. I have called this a *nominal* loan, because it was not the intention of his friend, that he should either receive it originally as a donation, or have it to refund in the end, and so it was finally arranged. This sum greatly relieved him, and had the effect of a charm, in restoring his mind to cheerfulness. A

few of his friends now urged upon him the necessity of setting immediately about preparing sermons, lectures, addresses, and other works, which he was known to have on hand in a crude state, for publication; and thus, during this temporary respite, create a source of income to meet other claims which would, ere long, be upon him. With this advice, he determined to comply; but his progress, owing to the multiplicity of other cares and labors, was but slow; so that most of his productions, if they should ever see the light at all, must meet the public eye without the advantage of his finishing touches and matured revision.

In 1848, he attended the Northern General Conference, as commissioner of the Southern Church; but his services in that capacity need not be particularly spoken of here.

In 1849, being satisfied that the church could never be brought to unite on Morrison College as a general church institution, and suspecting that the trustees were hardly satisfied with his exertions in behalf of the college — strenuous and persevering as they had been, and worn out with the drudgery and endless perplexity of his office — he resigned the presidency, which he had held in the university for seven toilsome years.

CHAPTER XXI.

Dr. B. employs himself in preparing a Volume of his Sermons for the Press, which is published early in 1850 — Its Reception — He is solicited to be a Candidate for the Episcopacy — At the General Conference reports the doings of Commissioners, which are unanimously Approved — Notice of his Services as Editor of Quarterly — Action of the Conference dissolving the connection with Transylvania — Dr. Bascom elected Bishop — His Election gave very General Satisfaction — An Untruthful Representation on this Subject Corrected (*Note*) — He Returns Home and Prepares to start on his Official Tour to the St. Louis Conference — Leaves home in Bad Health — Presides and Preaches with great Approbation — Resolution of the Conference — Visits different Places and Preaches — Reaches St. Louis, and Preaches his Last Sermon — Arrives at Louisville — Attempts to proceed home, but is compelled to Return, takes his bed, and receive Medical Treatment — Resignation — Dr. Stevenson's Account of his Illness — His Wife comes to him — The Closing Scene — Funeral Solemnities — General Expressions of Sorrow.

DURING the year that intervened between this period and the meeting of the General Conference, he devoted himself to the Quarterly, the preparation of a volume of his sermons for the press, and to his private affairs.

In the beginning of 1850 a volume of Dr. Bascom's sermons was published, and met a warm reception and ready sale. Indeed, few works of the kind in this country have been so well received; — the sales exceeding twenty thousand copies.

It was lauded alike by the secular and the

religious press, — by Methodist editors and those of other denominations. These sermons, as their title indicates, were not written for publication, but were originally mere outlines or skeletons from which he preached, or rather studied, his sermons — for he did not use them in the pulpit — in the earlier periods of his ministry. They were subsequently amplified as the author's views expanded — for the same use — until they grew to what we now find them in their printed form.

To those who heard them from the glowing lips of the living preacher they have a richer value, a deeper interest than if they had been carefully written for the eye and not the ear, for in their present form they call up associations of the past of the delightful character that we love to dwell on, and one seems not so much to read Bascom's sermon as to hear Bascom preach; the living orator is present in the mind's associations and recollections, and you see the impressive gesture, the speaking eye again, and again hear the clear ring of his trumpet voice in the grove, and still the weeping, rejoicing, enraptured congregation are around you: The whole scene is brought back, and with it the delightful feeling that then softened, and enlarged, and gladdened your heart. Those who have never heard the speaker will, of course, not enjoy equal advantages.

This one thing is worthy of remark in relation

to all Bascom's sermons; grand and gorgeous as was his style, his subjects were of the most solemn and important character. He never selected a subject because it was favorable to fine declamation; on the contrary, the great doctrines and duties of Christianity found a place in all his sermons, and in all, the atonement was the great standpoint from which he looked abroad over the field of theology — the centre of gravity to which all his discourses tended.

In the spring of 1850, as the time for the General Conference drew near, the public mind began to cast about for a suitable person for the episcopal office. Dr. Bascom was among the number of persons prominently spoken of for that post; but it was doubted whether under any circumstances he would permit his name to be used in that connection. An intimate friend was therefore requested to open a confidential correspondence with him on the subject. Bascom had previously made up his mind not to consent that his brethren should again cast their votes for him for that office, and assigned various reasons for this determination — such as his pecuniary difficulties, his long confinement to college labors, by which, as he said, he had in a measure lost his high tone of religious feeling, so essential to the proper discharge of the functions of that sacred office, and concluded by saying: "I cannot con-

sent to be put under the fearful responsibilities of that office, unless I could be convinced that my duty to God and the church required the sacrifice; but how is it possible that I can receive such a conviction when so many other names are before the church for the same office, and certainly in some respects, if not in all, better qualified for it than I can claim to be?"

There was also an objection brought against him by many of the preachers, as a candidate for the episcopacy; it was, that of late years he had adopted the habit of preaching generally from his manuscripts; this habit, it was urged, would not be tolerated in a Methodist Bishop. The fact was, that in his palmy days he never preached either from memory or manuscript, but from careful and laborious study of his subjects; but when he became the subject of bronchial affection, which required moderation in his pulpit labors, he resorted to reading as the most effectual way of putting a necessary restraint on his excessive pulpit efforts. The expedient was effectual, to be sure, in imposing restraint on his vehemence of delivery, but equally effectual in quenching the fire and weakening the power of his eloquence; and well did Mr. Clay say: "Bascom should never be allowed to read his sermons; *preaching* is his *forte* — but he cannot *read;* but he can *preach,* and he *must* preach!"

When the disease which superinduced this

habit had abated, his constant press of college and other labors, which allowed him no leisure for pulpit preparation on his former plan, became the apology for continuing a habit which he condemned as unsparingly as any of his brethren. Indeed, he preached so seldom that he in a great measure lost confidence in himself, and became timid about trusting himself in the pulpit without those embarrassing auxiliaries. But while he seemed to find a justification of himself in the practice, he readily agreed that a Bishop ought by no means, on any thing like ordinary occasions, to read his sermons, because of the pernicious effect of the example — seeming to forget that his own example would be more influential without that office, than that of most other men with it.

This confession was sufficient to satisfy his friends; for they well knew that what he admitted to be improper in a bishop, he would not do if he were made a bishop.

At the General Conference Dr. Bascom reported the doings of the commissioners respecting the matters in controversy between the Northern and the Southern Methodist Church, and had the satisfaction to find those proceedings approved by the unanimous vote of that body.

At this General Conference Dr. Bascom's term of service expired, as editor of the Quarterly Review. In this office he had labored under

circumstances of great disadvantage — circumstances, which would have caused a failure on the part of any but a mind of superior energy and talent; but in his hands it had grown into respectability, and had acquired rank and reputation with the best Quarterlies of the country, and had elicited flattering commendation from men and periodicals of the first class. A highly respectable cotemporary bears testimony in favor of the work in the language below:

"We have inadvertantly omitted for some time past to notice this highly valuable and interesting periodical. We would that all of our readers could avail themselves of the rich intellectual treasures of its instructive pages. To the *literati*, it is sufficient to say, it is edited by the eloquent and accomplished Dr. BASCOM; and it is only necessary to say to all, that its pages are diversified with literary, scientific, moral and religious matter, which cannot fail to interest and edify every reader."

The affairs of Transylvania College were, at this conference, taken up, and the committee on education made a report, evidently based on the views we have herein presented of the subject — that as none of the annual conferences out of Kentucky could be brought by their interest to officiate with that institution, "its interests would be more advantageously secured and managed by the Kentucky and Louisville annual conferences than

by a continuance of existing relations," and recommending, if the approval of those conferences and the trustees should be had, that such a connection should be formed instead of the existing one. Here ended the connection of the General Conference with Morrison college and Transylvania university — a connection which never should have been formed on the terms, and under the restrictions which embarrassed it, and rendered the accomplishment of the object contemplated impossible.

There never has been a more resolute and earnest effort made to sustain an institution where interest was not on its side, but indeed in opposition to it, as was the case everywhere out of Kentucky; but when Dr. Bascom was severed from it the last link was broken, and the annual conferences felt bound to concentrate all their efforts on their local colleges.

The committee on the episcopacy reported in favor of electing an additional bishop, and the conference adopted the report. The election came on, and on the second balloting Dr. Bascom was elected to the episcopacy by a large majority. On the Sabbath next succeeding, after delivering a sermon on the "Cross of Christ"—since published — he descended from the pulpit, and, by the venerable Bishop Soule, with the aid of the other bishops, was solemnly consecrated to the episcopal office.

All appeared to be well satisfied with this result; even those who, from local or personal considerations had voted for other candidates, received Dr. Bascom with as warm cordiality as they could those for whom their votes were cast: The bishops then in office welcomed him to their bench as a compeer honored and beloved;* and the whole church seemed to hail the event with pleasure and delightful anticipations. Even persons not connected with the church were forward to manifest their gratification with Dr. Bascom's elevation. An instance of this occurred presently after his ordination. So soon as it became publicly known that he would preside in the St. Louis conference, more than twenty of the principal citizens of Jefferson City—the capital of Missouri—addressed a joint note to the Bishop earnestly requesting him to visit their city, and concluding with "assurances of our high regard for your character as a Christian minister, and confidence in your ability to discharge the responsible trust recently committed to you, we have the honor," &c.

* An attempt was made presently after Dr. Bascom's advancement to the episcopacy, by a paper in the interest of abolitionism, to cast a shade upon his character, by alleging, or at least strongly intimating, that his elevation was much against the wish of the other bishops, who, it is assumed, had not confidence in his capacity or his integrity. It is not necessary to say more in reply than that the writer has the means of *knowing* that Dr. Bascom's election was very gratifying to three of the bishops then in office, and he *believes* the same to be true of the fourth.

After the adjournment of the General Conference, Bishop Bascom returned home, and set about arranging his affairs preparatory to entering upon the duties of his office. In the distribution of episcopal labors it was agreed that he should attend the session of the St. Louis annual conference, which was appointed to be held on the 10th of July following, at Independence, Mo. His health was very bad during this period, and as disease prevailed extensively through the country, he painfully foreboded the bad effects likely to result from his necessary exposure and labor on his first episcopal tour. On the 27th June, (1850,) in a letter to the writer he said: — "I start to the St. Louis conference, at Independence, July 10th — on Monday next, and expect to be back about the 25th. I have had no good health since my return from the General Conference, and I very much dread this trip."

In this state of health — the weather extremely hot, the streams low, and cholera rife on the rivers and through many parts of the country, he started on his tour, and with great difficulty and frequent detention, made his way to St. Louis, and thence up the Missouri river, to the seat of the conference. He had allowed himself what appeared to be ample time, but navigation was so difficult that he did not reach Independence until Saturday, the fourth day of the conference.

After the close of the conference the Secretary of that body wrote: — "On Saturday Bishop Bascom reached us, and on Sabbath preached in a grove adjoining the city to an immense multitude, estimated at three thousand persons. He disappointed us, but most agreeably; without a single note he gave a most clear and plain exposition of the sacred text, adapted to the comprehension of every mind. We have heard but one opinion expressed of this effort — that it was classically chaste, eloquent, and masterly."

The conference, during its session, adopted the following resolution:

"Resolved, by the St. Louis Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, that we take sincere pleasure in bearing testimony to the ability impartiality, and urbanity with which Bishop Bascom has presided over the deliberations of this conference, and to the dignified and affectionate intercourse which he has maintained with its members, endearing him to us as one of our chief ministers. While we record with peculiar satisfaction, that *ours* is the first conference over which he has presided since his election to the office of Bishop in the Church of God, we congratulate the whole Southern Church on this acquisition to the general superintendency, and confidently predict that the distinguished ability which has characterized his services in the several spheres of labor

heretofore assigned him by the church, will be emininently displayed in the new and higher one to which she has now called him."

After the conference closed, Bishop Bascom visited the Indian Manual Labor School, at Fort Leavenworth, with which he was greatly pleased. He also visited and preached on his tour, at Weston, Boonville, Lexington, and St. Louis. He reached the last named place — St. Louis — on Sabbath morning, the boat having failed to arrive at the appointed time, and took a room at the hotel at which he was accustomed to stop. A friend, hearing of his arrival, called on him, and I give the account furnished by that gentleman, of the interview:

"On entering his room, I found him pacing the floor, evidently under some excitement of feeling. He, however, took my hand with more than his usual warmth, at the same time exclaiming, 'Bro. C., I am sick — have been taking opium for twenty-four hours, but it does not relieve me, yet I hope it will soon pass off; God only knows.' 'I have called,' said I, 'at the instance of many friends, to know if you will consent to preach to-day.' 'Brother,' said he, 'I am unable to preach. I have not slept during the night; but suddenly stopping short, he added, after a momentary pause, 'It is possible, however, that I may not have another opportunity; so, if you will procure

me a congregation, I will preach at three o'clock.' He preached that afternoon to a crowded house of attentive hearers, with more than usual liberty and power — much more so, than at the General Conference some two months previous. Those who heard him in the most brilliant of his pulpit efforts twenty years ago, were forcibly reminded of his sermons in those days. His text was — '*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke unto the fathers by the prophets, hath, in these last days, spoken unto us by His Son.*' He preached about two hours, and greatly exhausted himself by the effort."

This was his last sermon. The next morning he left St. Louis for his home, and on the 2d of August, arrived at Louisville, Kentucky. The Louisville Christian Advocate announced his return, and remarked: —

"The bishop was greatly delighted with the spirit of self-sacrificing devotion to the interests of primitive Methodism, which, he thinks, has been, and is still being evinced, by the members of the conference. In fine, he has made the tour under circumstances the most unfavorable — in the midst of disease and death; but, through the abundant mercy of God, his life has been preserved, and he returns home, bearing with him sentiments of the highest regard for those with whom his lot has been cast, and with feelings of the most affec-

tionate gratitude for the numerous acts of Christian courtesy, kindness, and hospitality that he has experienced during his absence. Long may he live as an honor to the ministry, and as a blessing to the church, in the present important relation that he sustains." This wish, however, was not to be realized.

Bishop Bascom's toils and exposures in a sickly season, had implanted the seeds of deep disease in the strong predisposing and susceptible condition of his system; and, after reaching Louisville, he became so ill, as to be utterly unfit to proceed; but his earnest desire to reach home, before the coming on of the more serious attack, foreboded by his symptoms and feelings, inclined him to run some risk to accomplish this object. Accordingly, he had himself booked for the morning stage, and then spent a sick night at the house of Rev. Dr. Stevenson. About three o'clock in the morning, he was called for, and against the remonstrance of friends, took his departure, hoping to be, that night, with his own family, but the stage had scarcely passed the city limits, when he found himself utterly too sick to proceed.

His sickness was attended with such symptoms as induced some of the passengers to suspect that it was cholera. Quite a panic was created in the stage, and it was proposed to put him out on the roadside in the dark. Against this proceeding,

one passenger earnestly protested; and when the driver came to understand what was proposed, he positively affirmed that it should not be done. "What, then, will you do with him?" was inquired. "Take him back," responded the driver, "at the risk of my life;" and accordingly he did so. In about an hour after his departure, he was brought back to the house of Dr. Stevenson, and carried to his bed. Medical aid was called in, and every possible effort made to arrest the progress of the malady, but with only temporary alleviation. Yet, through all, by patient resignation, he exemplified the sustaining power of that gospel which, so long and successfully, he had preached to others.

Dr. Stevenson, who was with him day and night, and at whose house he lay, says of him:

"During the whole period of his painful and protracted illness, he was never heard to utter the first murmuring or complaining word. He bore his afflictions throughout with that manly fortitude, patience and resignation to the Divine will, for which he had so long been pre-eminently distinguished. I always found him, on entering his room, calm, self-possessed, and, when spoken to perfectly rational.

"From the commencement of his attack, he appeared to be deeply impressed with the certainty of his approaching dissolution. On different occasions he said to me, when no one was present but

myself: '*Brother Stevenson, my disease is untouched; I am no better — I do not think that I shall ever recover! my physicians have done the best they could — my only trust is in Almighty goodness.*'

"When prayer was proposed, as it frequently was in the early stages of his disease, he always promptly assented; and, when not writhing in agony, he invariably joined in the petitions with much apparent interest and feeling.

"Some six or seven days previous to his death, I informed him that I was about to mail some letters to Bishop Andrew, at the seat of the Western Virginia Conference, and asked him if he had any communications to make to the bishop? He looked at me with much interest, 'Yes, say to Bishop Andrew, from me, that I am utterly prostrate, with but little, if any, hope of recovery — that I am incapable of thinking or acting on any subject; and after a moment's pause, he added — "but say to him, that all my trust and confidence is in Almighty goodness, *as revealed in the cross of Christ.*' These last words he uttered with an *emphasis* that can never be erased from my memory. He could say no more — I retired, leaving him in tears."

His little daughter was seriously ill at home at the same time, in consequence of which his wife did not reach him until ten days before his death. At first, for a while, she entertained strong hope

of his recovery; but in a few days yielded to the sad conviction, that, without a speedy change for the better, he could not live. From the nature of his disease, he was little inclined to conversation — indeed spoke seldom and little. One of the most devoted of fathers, he yet never spoke of his children; for this he knew would tend to disturb his tranquillity in the conflict that called for all his fortitude and self-possession. On Thursday and Friday preceding his death, he suffered extremely, and his stomach would receive nothing. Dr. Bright watched with him all Friday night, and when at length he succeeded in getting medicine to take effect, the bishop grew more easy, and could take a little nourishment at times. About one o'clock on Sabbath morning — the 8th September — he grew restless, and tossing from side to side, complained of weariness, and desired rest, but could not compose himself to sleep. About seven o'clock on Sabbath morning, he was helped up, at his desire, but presently had a spasm or fainting fit. He was laid down, restoratives applied, and the physician and friends sent for. In the midst of the alarm he recovered, opened his eyes, and calmly smiled. "Never mind, wife," said he, "I am better now, and don't want the doctor." It now became evident that his naturally powerful constitution could hold out no longer against the destroyer, and that his end was just at hand. Dr.

Bright, the oldest physician in attendance and a local minister, was appointed to break the gloomy intelligence to him. He informed the bishop that he could live but a short time, and inquired, "Is your confidence in your God and your Saviour still strong and unshaken?" He promptly replied, "YES, YES, YES."

"He then desired to be turned over on his right side," says Dr. Stevenson, "which being done, he placed both his hands in those of his afflicted wife, who sat at his side — gave us all a last intelligible parting look, and then, without a struggle or groan, breathed his last." Bascom, the prince of pulpit orators, was dead! Death had triumphed over a noble specimen of physical manhood; but grace had enabled a nobler spirit to triumph over death, and had made his dark prison house but a subterranean passage from "gloom to glory."

Most opportunely, it was the calm rest of the Sabbath, when Bascom entered upon his eternal Sabbath rest, and the very hour, too, of the Sabbath, at which, so many hundreds of times, he had opened his mouth before admiring thousands, to proclaim the glorious salvation by Christ Jesus the Lord, and the heavenly rest, that "remains for the people of God."

By lightning couriers, the gloom-inspiring intelligence was swiftly borne over the nation, and ere the fresh corpse was laid down in its charnel bed,

thousands, tens of thousands, all over the land, were mourning in unison the church's sad bereavement, and in spirit joined the weeping multitude that moved in solemn procession to his grave.

Tuesday, September 10th, at ten o'clock, was the time fixed on for the funeral obsequies; and though in a busy commercial city, thousands assembled to pay their last tribute of respect to the great departed.

The funeral solemnities were introduced by Rev. Dr. Parsons, who read a number of solemn passages of sacred scripture appropriate to the occasion, in his most impressive manner. This was followed by singing the hymn, commencing —

"Servant of God, well done!
Rest from thy loved employ," etc.

"The effect," says Dr. Stevenson, "was overwhelming. Much feeling pervaded the entire assembly during the singing, and under the very solemn and impressive prayer which he offered up on the occasion to the throne of the heavenly grace. The vast assembly was then addressed for a few moments by Rev. Wm. Holeman, (being the oldest Methodist minister present.) He had long known, admired, and ardently loved the deceased, and was too deeply affected to proceed with many remarks. He spoke with much feeling and interest of his Christian experience — call to the ministry — self-sacrificing labors — and unim-

peachable rectitude of character and conduct throughout the whole period of his ministry."

He was followed by Dr. Sehon, who delivered a feeling, eloquent, and effective oration.

The services at the church were closed, with an impressive prayer by Rev. Dr. Linn.

"The remains of the deceased were then conveyed to the Eastern Cemetery, or Methodist burying-ground, attended by a numerous procession of hacks and carriages, crowded with weeping friends and acquaintances."

Before the coffin was committed to the vault, the funeral service of the church was read by Rev. Dr. Stevenson. The service was closed by singing the beautifully solemn hymn —

"Thou art gone to the grave," etc.

The body was then committed to the tomb, and the sorrowing multitude retired in silence and sadness.

Deep was the sorrow felt at the death of Bishop Bascom, and deep was the expression of grief all over the country. The public press, which for years had noted all his public movements, and during his illness had constantly reported the progress of the disease to its final catastrophe, now gave free expression to feelings of sorrow and admiration, and hundreds of eulogies, more or less full and extended, reached the public through this

medium. Brief extracts from a few of these, it seems proper to copy into this work — more we cannot make room for. The first two are from secular papers: —

"BISHOP BASCOM.

'He was not for one age, but for all time.'

"The above splendid tribute, which was paid to the genius of the poet, is equally merited by the talents and works of the lamented divine.

"In the death of this distinguished prelate, it is not alone the wide extended and respectable communion of which he was the pride and ornament, that has suffered loss, but society at large. The church may mourn and array herself in the habiliments of woe when the good and the useful of her ministers are called away. This is doubtless right and proper, but wider far is the extent of the calamity, for the world is bereaved when the good and the great man falls.

"To say that Bishop Bascom was one of the first men of the age, in almost every respect, is no special compliment paid to his memory, but a plain declaration of the simple truth.

"As an orator, he was almost peerless; as a divine, he was deeply profound and learned; as a Christian, unreservedly devoted to his cause; and as a man and a friend, as immovable in his attachments as the granite rock of earth.

"We knew him well, and a hundred times have

hung almost breathless and entranced upon his Apollo-like speech and form. But he is gone. — 'Peace to his manes.' In all the proportions of mind and heart, which, in harmonious combination, make up the perfect man, we doubt that 'we e'er shall look upon his like again.' It is understood that he has left many valuable manuscripts, which are the labor of his life. It is to be hoped that speedy arrangements will be made for their early publication."

"Bishop Bascom. — In the death of this distinguished divine, which took place on the 8th inst., at the residence of his friend of thirty years' standing, Dr. Stevenson, the church and the world have experienced irremediable loss.

"Common men may 'bustle on' in the world — may fill their places in society — may live out their lives unnoticed, and fall forgotten into obscure graves; but not so when the talented, the good, and the great depart. The whole moral world is affected — all feel that they have suffered an irreparable loss.

"The death of Bishop Bascom is a public calamity, and so must be regarded by all who in the least degree esteem moral and intellectual worth. Not only does the wide-spread communion, of which he was the ornament, suffer in this sorrowful event, but thousands, in no way connected with the church, who have listened to his burning

eloquence, when they hear of his death, will feel that they have lost a friend, and count the grief their own; for, in the most enlarged sense, he was the world's preacher and the world's friend. But he fell as all true heroes love to fall, clad in his panoply and in the midst of the battle. A noble pillar has been overthrown; and yet he dies not to the world. He lives in his works. 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors and their works do follow them.'"

The following is from a Baptist weekly: —

"BISHOP BASCOM. — Died, in this city on Sunday morning, the 8th instant, after a protracted and painful illness, Rev. Henry B. Bascom, D. D., one of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

"The funeral services took place at the Fourth street Methodist church, on Tuesday, the 10th instant, at ten o'clock. Thus has gone down one of the brightest lights in the Methodist Episcopal church. In his death, he was calm, and resigned to the will of God.. The brilliant ministerial career of the orator, is a living specimen of the elevation to which devoted and persevering energy may conduct the aspiring to learning and usefulness. We have not room for remarks upon the life of Bishop Bascom. His death in the very prime and maturity of his masterly powers, will fill many hearts with painful anguish."

The next is taken from a Northern Methodist paper:

"This is an event that cannot fail to send a thrill of sorrow through the heart of Methodism, especially of American Methodism. Henry B. Bascom was no ordinary man. His prominent talents, and especially his wonderful pulpit oratory, have given him a wide celebrity. He was extensively known and extensively beloved. Though for a few years past the family feud in American Methodism has caused the affections of many to cool towards Dr. Bascom, and other distinguished men of the South, whom the whole Church formerly delighted to honor, yet will there be thousands of hearts, even in the North, that will heave a sigh when they hear that Bascom is no more. Though the few latter years of his life have been devoted chiefly to the services of a particular division of Methodism, yet his name and fame belong to our common family, to Methodism in general, to the North as well as the South."

The following is from the pen of Rev. Dr. Wightman, of Charleston: —

"Death of Bishop Bascom. — The intelligence of this mournful event, communicated by telegraph from Louisville, reached us just after our last week's edition had gone to press. The Bishop died on the morning of the 8th instant, after a protracted illness, taken as he was returning to

Kentucky, after holding the St. Louis conference: the first and only conference at which he lived to preside after his elevation to the episcopal office. Stricken down by death in the ripe maturity of those great intellectual and oratorical powers which had made his name familiar to the whole nation, and upon the threshhold of a new field of ecclesiastical responsibilities, wider than he had ever filled before, with the promise of many years valuable service to the Church which had honored him with its highest confidence and affection, the visitation is one of the utmost solemnity. In view of the fresh grave where now lies the mighty master of eloquence on whose lips hundreds of thousands have hung entranced, whose name could call together a vaster throng of listeners than that of any other man on the continent, — the grave, where every trophy of genius, and every lineament of manly beauty, is laid low, we are reminded of Massillon's impressive exordium over the plumed and scutchioned bier of the young French prince — '*there is nothing great but God.*'

"Our personal acquaintance with Dr. Bascom began at the General Conference of 1840. During this conference he presented a masterly report in favor of the right and eligibility to orders of local preachers holding slaves within the Virginia portion of the Baltimore conference. This paper was a specimen of clear and close argumentation. At

the same conference he preached in the Light street Church to as dense a throng as could crowd into the spacious building — the adjoining street being filled with people who could not find entrance into the church. His text was — "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." The sermon embraced all the cardinal elements of the Christian system, set forth in a light so vivid, under illustrations so overpoweringly magnificent, and with a vehemence so rushing and pauseless, as to hold the vast audience spell-bound. At particular passages, several of which we distinctly remember, the effect was awful. The sentences came like the sharp zig-zag lightning, the tones of the preacher's voice were like articulate thunder. The hearer cowered under the weight of thought piled on thought, and was driven almost beside himself by the rapid whirl of dazzling imagery. The sermon, artistically considered, had the strange fault of being too great. It covered too vast a field of thought, it was marred by excess of grandeur. You were bewildered by the quick succession of vivid pictures thrown off as by the turn of some grand kaleidoscope. The impassioned fervor of the preacher seemed too self-consuming. We felt, as some one has happily remarked respecting Chalmers, that powers and resources, such as these, devoted to the service of the gospel, were indeed not needed by gospel-rejecting man.

The consecration of such a majestic intellect and imagination to the work of propagating the principles of Christianity could but make a profound and wide impression upon society. Thousands of cultivated minds coming within the reach of such an influence, have been compelled to respect the system advocated by so lofty a spirit, and have been prepared to lend an unprejudiced ear to simple ministrations.

"His dying hours were full of peace and confidence in Christ's atoning merit. Like two of his greatest contemporaries, Emory and Fisk, his life seems to have closed with a strange abruptness ere its full completion. His scholastic labors were ended, but he had been called from the halls of instruction, once more into a sphere of extended travel and preaching, with the added responsibilities of government, for all of which his previous training seemed to have peculiarly qualified him. But no sooner does he spread his wing of towering strength than the fatal shaft of disease lays him low. Among the distinguished dead of this memorable year, 1850, we have to record the name of Henry B. Bascom. When shall the present generation 'look upon his like again?' We sympathize with his bereft widow, with his children deprived of parental guidance and fostering care. We sorrow with a sorrowing church, one of whose brightest lights has been so unexpectedly

quenched. We mark the impressive admonition, so repeated before the country of late, that neither exalted position nor mighty influence; neither genius nor virtue, can claim exemption from the common lot of mortality, or turn away the approach of the inevitable hour. Happy for us in this instance, while we exclaim, 'how are the mighty fallen!' we know that to fall as did the illustrious man before us, with harness on, girded, and grasping shield and sword, is to conquer death — in the language of the immortal FEW — 'Brother soldier, it is sweet, sweet, to die on the field of battle.'"

In many towns and cities — as St. Louis, Memphis, Lexington — public meetings of the citizens or the church were called, and resolutions adopted and published, expressive of their high appreciation of the worth of the deceased, and sorrow for his loss. Like proceedings were had in many, if not all, the southern annual conferences.

In Nashville, St. Louis, Memphis, and many other cities, and at the annual conferences, public funerals were observed, and appropriate sermons or orations were delivered. Some of these possessed great merit, and some were published at the time with good effect. We might enlarge this work by rich and appropriate extracts from those excellent discourses, but our limits will not admit so wide a range.

Thus lived and died HENRY B. BASCOM, one of the most noble and mighty of human kind — a sage, an orator, a philosopher, a faithful friend, an humble and trusting Christian.

He left an afflicted widow, a daughter, born May 1841, and a son — born February 10, 1843, to mourn their irreparable loss.

To the cause of God and humanity, he devoted the energies of a noble body, and a still more noble mind and heart; in acts of benevolence and pious charity, he expended thousands; and he left to his children a rich inheritance of fame, but *not a dollar* for their support and education.

CHAPTER XXII.

CHARACTER OF BISHOP BASCOM.

Character of Bishop Bascom — Scholarship — Filial and Fraternal Affection — Benevolence — Social Qualities and Intercourse with Ladies — Bascom as a Writer — As a Preacher and Orator — Preparations for the Pulpit — His Piety.

WE have now traced the narrative of Bishop Bascom's life from his birth to his grave; and herein we have learned much of his labors and sufferings, much of his reputation, and not a little of his *character;* yet, in that character there were strong points which could not well be brought out in the narrative without severing its links too widely, and which therefore we propose now to consider in a separate chapter.

His Scholarship.

I once heard a man of moderate mind, but respectable learning, and perhaps a little tincture of invidiousness, say: "Dr. Bascom is no scholar: he could not now enter a regular freshman class on examination." The first position he took to be an evident corollary of the second; if he could not pass an examination for entering college, it was clear that he could not be a scholar. This is the verdict of a narrow mind. The same assertion

would be found true with respect to a very large proportion of all who have graduated regularly and with honor. Is a man the better scholar for having once known what he has long since forgotten? Suppose Dr. Bascom to have been deficient in the details of learning, pertaining to a common college course, those studies are at most little more than instruments to be used in acquiring real learning. If he reached the latter *per saltum*, by the efforts of a mighty intellect, without the slower processes necessary to common minds, this would seem to entitle him to higher commendation, and not discredit. But the truth is, that though gold is gold, whether in the quartz, the ingot, or the coin, it is the stamp and not the pure metal that gives it currency with those incapable of judging for themselves; and with such, that stamp would give to a worthless alloy the value of virgin gold.

Yet, if the *stamp* be of so great importance, he had that too, though not in the ordinary way and order; he was not coined by the mint into golden pennies, but stamped in a great ingot. The churches accredited him as a man of superior learning; hundreds of thousands, upon an examination of his productions and performances, so accredited him; aye, and the literary institutions of the country did the same. With respect to the latter, he was first admitted to the unsolicited

honor of Master of Arts by a highly respectable college, to that of Doctor of Divinity by another, and then *Adeundum* by another college and by two universities, and, finally, by another to that of Doctor of Laws. In a word, he received every grade of literary distinction conferrable by the colleges of the country. Besides, he was ten years professor in one college, three years president of another, invited to the presidency of two others, and seven years president of the oldest university in the south-west. His literary claims were farther accredited by nearly every respectable college and university in the west and south-west, in the fact of their calling on him to deliver literary addresses before them on those occasions, when they wish to exhibit their literary character to the best advantage. If this be not a sufficient endorsement of his scholarship, we know of no one who has or is likely to have such endorsement.

All this, however, is but the "guinea's stamp;" a few words now respecting the gold itself.

Mr. Bascom made himself acquainted with the elements and structure of the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages, and read them all with some satisfaction to himself, but never studied them with thoroughness, nor qualified himself to teach them. He studied also, in a general way, several other languages, ancient and modern.. His knowledge

of pure mathematics was rather general than minute; but in some departments of mixed mathematics, his knowledge was much more perfect. In the different branches of natural science his attainments were respectable; in mental and moral science he was thorough and profound, and so in political economy, and general belles-lettres literature. Without being a proficient in the *languages* of the ancient classics, with ancient classic literature itself he was remarkably familiar. In the compass of his theological knowledge he had few equals. There was no author of note in that department, with whose works he was not acquainted; and his knowledge of general and miscellaneous literature was perfectly astonishing. You might select what subject or work you choose in that general range, and you were sure to find him familiarly at home in conversing of its merits. And, indeed, it could hardly be otherwise with a man who devoured every book that fell in his way, and never forgot anything he read. Even when harrassed by debt, bowed down with labor and care, and prostrated by sickness, he read more than a hundred pages a day on an average. Think of a man whose hoarding memory never parted with any of its acquisitions, casting into that capacious depository the contents of one or two hundred pages a day for forty years, and imagine, if you can, the vast sum of intellectual and literary

wealth there garnered up. Until you do this, and then imagine, too, the myriads of mental creations wrought by the machinery of his own master mind, from those materials operating suggestively upon it, you can form no adequate conception of the mental opulence of this intellectual prince.

The versatile power of his mind and cyclopedia-like scope of his knowledge frequently perplexed men who regarded themselves as great and learned, and their attempts to explain a superiority they could not comprehend was sometimes amusing. There could be no higher evidence of the astonishing universality of his knowledge, than that furnished in the fact that, in whatever department one first heard him, he was sure to regard that as the orator's favorite field or theme. I remember a striking instance of this: An editor of note having heard Dr. Bascom deliver a missionary discourse, eulogized the performance without stint; but added, "This is evidently the orator's favorite field of action and display," when, in fact, this was among the first, perhaps, the very first public missionary address that Bascom had ever delivered. On one occasion, he was proposed for a service so unusual for one of his profession, that it was suggested he could not be qualified for it. "Give yourself no concern on that head," replied one who knew him better, "you have only to secure his acceptance, and you will have as good an

address as can be made by any man, no matter what may be the subject."

Bascom in his Domestic Relations.

On this subject, it is not necessary to add much. We have seen his devotion to his mother, and have seen her calmly die with her hands clasped in his; we have seen him adopt his dead sister's infant daughters, and support and educate them; we have marked his untiring attention to his father, through seven years of confinement and suffering, and have seen him kneeling at the bedside to receive the last blessing of his dying parent; we have seen him nourish and nurse his step-mother to the end of her life, and become a father to her orphans; we have seen him bring on himself a whole life of painful involvement, for the love he bore to those to whom he was bonded by ties of blood; and we have seen, him at last, when his hour was come, place his hands affectionately in those of his companion, and calmly render back his spirit to God. And yet, we have not seen all, nor can we.

In 1833, when the cholera was dragging down thousands to the tomb, a beloved brother was seized with the fatal malady. Bascom, not only did everything in his power to relieve the sufferer, but he went with the case to the Great Physician, and entered up the following solemn vow, which I find

among his papers: "God of destiny!—the destiny of men and angels!—only vouchsafe, through Jesus Christ, for the sake of the wretched and unfortunate, to show thyself the God of mercy, as it would appear to him who asks the boon, by restoring my brother, now the victim of the fell disease, which has appeared among us, as the destroying angel of judgment, and I hereby most solemnly pledge myself to thy service more devotedly than at any former period.

"July 1, 1833. H. B. BASCOM."

This is true affection; it not only gives all possible succor to the suffering, but, but when human aid fails, goes to God, and covenants with the Most High for help.

Well did the late Dr. Ruter say: Whatever narrow minds may think, the wise and good will regard this as a most noble trait in Bascom's character." And well did Bishop Andrew say: "I honor and admire Bascom, the eloquent orator, but most I love Bascom, the affectionate brother, the dutiful and loving son."

He was Benevolent and Kind.

He was benevolent; perhaps even faultily so his was not a calculating charity:-he paused not to inquire either into the worthiness of the applicant, or his own ability to bestow; if he had the means, no matter what other and paramount demands

might claim them, he could not turn any away empty. He would not only divide his last dollar and his last loaf with one who appeared to be needy, but he would give the whole.* He was in consequence often most meanly imposed on by unworthy persons who knew his disposition. But he was wont to say, "better give to ten unworthy applicants, than turn away one case of real distress."

Nor was his charity and kindness limited to the mere matter of giving, it ran through all his actions. He was lenient in his judgment and his remarks respecting others. Elevated himself, if not above the reach of criticism, yet beyond the fear of its effects, he seldom indulged in critical remarks on the productions of others. If he heard a sermon, or other discourse which, as a whole, was deserving commendation, he would commend it as a whole, but in clear and unequivocal terms; if an inferior one, he would find such points and features in it as had merit, if such there were, and direct attention to that of which he

* This is literally true; of which the following is an instance. Mrs. M. ..., of Cabell county, Va., used to tell, that when Bascom was on Guyandotte circuit — the circuit on which he received twelve dollars and ten cents for a very hard year's work — he came to her house on one occasion, with no shoes on; and when the reason was inquired into, it was ascertained that he had met with a poor man who had no shoes and no way of getting any, and he took the only pair he had off his own feet and gave them to the man — assigning as a reason, that though he had no money, he had friends who would not permit him to go barefoot, but the poor man had not.

could speak favorably with a good conscience; but his rule was to give no opinion at all when he could say nothing approbatory. If he departed from this rule, it was in the instances of men who were themselves intolerant and uncharitable in their remarks on others; and then, he would not speak *of* them, but *to* them, if practicable. He felt great contempt for such as seek their own elevation by fault finding and petty criticisms; and woe to the luckless wight who attempted it in his presence.

On one occasion, as he was returning from hearing a sound but inornate sermon, a young preacher who seemed to think that Bascom could relish nothing that was not garbed in his own lofty style, remarked to him with an air of criticism: "A plain, old fashioned sermon to-day. What did you think of it, doctor?" "I thought," responded Bascom, "that it was neither plainer nor more old fashioned than the gospel, and that it would have done honor to St. Paul's, in London."

On another occasion, after Dr. B. had delivered one of his best sermons, an unpretending, aged minister was called on to preach the next succeeding discourse; after the latter had concluded, a young preacher of more sprightliness than solidity, commenced a criticism on the alleged imperfections of the sermon, respecting some nice points in its rhetoric and grammar, and seemed disposed to

cast the whole away on account of those blemishes. "It was an excellent sermon," responded Bascom firmly, "one of which you or I might be proud, and with defects too inconsiderable for the notice of anything but hypercriticism; but if a man will reject the light of the sun because of a minute speck on his broad disc, he had better take his classification with kindred owls and bats."

He was the young preacher's friend under all circumstances of difficulty not involving crime, and there was no man to whom such could apply with so much certainty of aid as to Bascom.* So long as there was hope of curing errors, or overcoming ignorance, he would stand by them, and with them he was almost an idol. He never forgot the time when the ecclesiastical guillotine was about to sever his head, nor the kind interposition of the good old bishop who averted its stroke, and said: "Give me that young man; I'll take care of him;" and through life he labored to pay back that kindness by helping others in like circumstances.

* This remark applies as well to all young men of merit and integrity as to young preachers. A letter before me, under date of July, 1853, from an attorney, says: "Judging from my own case, he was certainly distinguished for his kindness and generosity towards the young. And my own testimony, upon that point, but confirms what others have said, in attributing to him so interesting a trait. A gentleman who now occupies a proud eminence upon the bench of M....., owes, it is said, the successful shaping of his destiny to the bishop's discovery of a germ in the mind of a little boy behind the counter of a village store.

He was ever particularly attentive to the poor and the afflicted. True, he was frequently accused of haughtiness, but it was by those who knew him not. Proud he may have been, in the better sense of that term, but he had none of the mean pride that scorns or neglects the poor or the suffering; it would be more in consonance with his nature to take pride in showing marked respect to the virtuous poor, if it were but to show the world's proud ones how entirely he was above being influenced by their evil example. And his attentions to the poor and afflicted were not bestowed with an air of condescension and patronage calculated to make them feel their inferiority and dependence; but he came rather as a kind and respectful friend, claiming no superiority, but seeming to regard it a privilege to visit them. Instances of this kind might be related in great numbers, but only a few can be admitted.*

At one time, there was a poor afflicted woman

* On Bishop Bascom's tour to Missouri — his last — the passengers on the boat, generally, seemed for a time to regard him as distant and repulsive in his manner; but presently the cholera broke out among them, and though there were some medicines, there was no physician aboard, and the panic was terrible. The Bishop had seen much of the disease, and had administered to its victims. He, therefore, went to work at once and in good earnest to relieve the sufferers. All his skill and efforts were freely, diligently, and constantly bestowed, and throughout the voyage he acted as physician of both body and mind; and the man who had been looked on at first, as cold and austere, came to be regarded as an angel of mercy to the suffering.

residing nearly in the line of direction from his dwelling to the college; he learned the fact of her destitution, sent food from his own table, called at her hovel, conversed with her, and prayed for her. This was continued so long as his attentions were necessary.

Dr. E. reports to me a case from a much earlier period of his life, dating back to 1815–16:

"A sensible old Virginian, who had been reduced to indigence, and who resided on his circuit, predicted Bascom's future greatness, on the ground of his devoted attentions to the poor, and to himself and his family, in particular. Bascom would help the poor old man make a fire in the morning, then pray in the family, partake of his ash cake, venison, and wild honey, and then read and expound the scriptures to him, until the hour for starting to his next appointment. I knew the old man well, and to the day of his death he would speak of Bascom with a full heart."

The same gentleman says, Bascom was a favorite with the poor on that circuit — that "many a time he would rise from his bed, go out and fell trees and haul wood till breakfast time, then pray with the family, breakfast, and read and expound the word of God until his time for departure."

I remember to have witnessed a scene in which he was an actor, such as one is not likely to forget. He had been sent for a distance of several hun-

dred miles, to deliver an address on a great occasion. He had just concluded a splendid discourse to a concourse of thousands, and a group of *magnates* had clustered around him, including the governor and different general officers of the state, a number of the literati, and others, when a man and woman plainly attired in homespun, were seen pressing through the crowd, evidently trying to reach the great centre of attraction for the day. Bascom's eye fell on them. and — for if he never forgot any *thing*, he never forgot any *person*—he instantly recognized them as poor pious people in whose humble cot he had been often kindly entertained, in a distant state, more than twenty years previous to this interview. The great men around him seemed to be lost sight of, and grasping their hands with fervor — "Is it possible! Brother and sister ——! This is a most unexpected pleasure!" After a few kind inquiries, he fixed on a time and place for "a long talk about old times," which he said he must have with them. Some shadow of fear had passed over their minds that, in his present high position he would, as they expressed it, "feel himself above poor folks;" but their warm welcome banished that shadow, and overwhelmed them with delight and admiration. I never saw people look more happy. As they passed out of the crowd, the old gentleman said, with a beaming face, "He's Bascom yet." "Yes,

he is," responded the delighted old lady; "didn't I *tell* you they couldn't spoil Henry? Bascom's apology for so abruptly withdrawing attention from the distinguished men around him, was as independent and noble as his reception of the poor couple had been cordial. To apologize for speaking kindly to poor people, was what never entered his great soul, nor did he utter a word from which it could be inferred, that he regarded the linsey-clad pair in a light of inferiority, either to himself or to the personages about him. "Excuse my inattention to you, gentlemen; but these are old friends of mine, whom I have not seen for more than twenty years, and to whose kindness I am a large debtor." This was all. Never did Bascom appear more truly great.

His friendship was the most "true and trusty." Of this, we have met with striking instances in the narrative of his life. It was almost literally true, that "he *never* forsook a friend." Persecution, affliction, adversity, only drew him into closer bonds of friendship, and as the storm raged louder and more fearfully, he clung still more closely to the pelted victim. Nothing short of crime could cause him to relinquish his grasp; and when even this was charged upon his friend, he was usually the very last man in the whole community who would yield to such a conviction, and never until forced into it by irresistible evidence.

His Social Habits.

To strangers Dr. Bascom was rather inaccessible; this was not, however, owing to haughtiness, unsocial temper, or coldness. but to the want of a talent for making new acquaintances with facility, especially when there was no mutual friends to serve as a medium of access. But when the ice was once fairly broken, no man was more free, communicative, or confiding; indeed, he was frequently censured for then being too free, trusting, and unsuspicious.

When these remarks are applied to him in relation to females, they may assist in explaining some things in his history otherwise not quite intelligible. Towards them generally, he was reserved and apparently cold, and was many times accused as wanting in common courtesy to the sex. He was by no means a gallant, and seldom waited on a lady except when it was unavoidable. Yet when he was repeatedly thrown into the society of an intelligent and amiable female, and a familiar acquaintance thus grew up between them, it was in his nature to be free and friendly in his intercourse. As this happened but seldom, when it did occur it was not unnatural in the lady thus singled out, to infer more from his unreserved friendship than was intended. The like attentions from one who bestowed them almost promiscuously

and universally would probably have excited no expectations at all; but when a young lady found herself the only familiar female acquaintance he had in a community of thousands, she was very likely to infer more from it than mere friendship.

I have known more instances than one in which young ladies thought themselves improperly treated by him, and in which their friends have charged a violation of "engagement" on his part, which, when thoroughly inquired into, amounted to nothing more than what has just been stated. Indeed, there is one case in my possession, well authenticated, in which a young woman complained of his want of good faith in not marrying her, when her whole ground of claim on him consisted in the fact of his having visited her pastorally when sick.

But candor requires a brief notice at least of another class of cases — I say *class*, because there are supposed to have been several of them. In such cases, he became acquainted with a lady who appeared to possess all the qualifications requisite to constitute her a good wife; he was susceptible, he intended at sometime to marry; — acquaintance grew into friendship, and friendship into a higher attachment, and that attachment was declared. But he was incumbered with a family, and manacled with debt, and so could not marry, perhaps for several years, perhaps for many — possibly never. Under such circumstances it was probably improper

to form the attachment, and it may have been more so to declare it, for such declarations are exceedingly embarrassing—seldom terminate well, and oftener than otherwise have to be broken off as the best method of getting out of a difficulty that ought to have been "left off ere it was meddled with."

He would not marry under circumstances which would subject his wife's property to the payment of his debts; and though hoping and half expecting from year to year to find himself in a condition to enter the matrimonial state, he never took this long intended step until he had attained the mature age of forty-three. Then, his adopted family had become less, and consequently his current expenses lessened; just then, too, he had saved some three thousand dollars from the proceeds of his lectures, and hoped to be able soon to make his way out of the embarrassments which had so long hung around him. But true to his principles in this matter, he legally secured to his wife all her own property, so that it should not be affected by his pecuniary difficulties.

Into whatever errors or mistakes Dr. Bascom may have fallen in relation to the subject mentioned above, I could not be better satisfied than I am, that nothing was farther from his heart than a design to get the affections of a lady entangled with an intention of disappointing her authorized

expectations. His experience may however operate as an admonition to young preachers not to enter into matrimonial engagements, or to make declarations clearly pointing in that direction, until they can "see the end from the beginning," or in other words, until they can fix with some certainty on the period of consummation. Nearly all the difficulties of this class in which young ministers become involved originate in the neglect of this admonition. But on the other hand, the remarkable prudence and reserve of Dr. Bascom in his general intercourse with females, may well be held up as an example worthy to be imitated by young preachers.

In connection with the subject of matrimony, many anecdotes are told of Bascom, some of them singular and amusing, but most of them probably apochryphal. I shall relate but one, which is said to be authentic. A lady of no common attractions and advantages, permitted her affections to become so deeply interested in him, that breaking through the barrier of conventional propriety, she addressed a note to him declaring her state of feeling, and making him a tender of "her hand, her fortune, and her heart." His reply suggested to her that she very imperfectly appreciated the responsibility, trials and sacrifices of the position she so generously proposed to assume—that from a knowledge of her habits, manner of life, and the character of her

associations, he was convinced she would not be happy for any length of time in such a situation, and therefore declined an offer the acceptance of which would only render her unhappy; and concluded by advising her to dispose of the valuable gifts tendered, in a manner more conducive to her happiness, by giving her "heart to God, her wealth to the poor, and her hand to the worthy man who might solicit it."

Rev. Mr. Bruce has furnished me with an anecdote illustrative of his reserve towards females, which is too good to be lost. Mr. Bruce in 1837, rode the circuit within which Mr. Bascom's father lived and died, and during that year held a protracted meeting in that immediate neighborhood, at which he was assisted by Dr. Bascom. After service they dined at the house of Mr. F., a special friend of Bascom, with whom he had lived, and for whom he had labored before he entered the ministry. When they were all seated at the table Mr. F. said: — "I must tell you an anecdote of Henry: When he lived with us, I and Mrs. F. made a visit to our uncle in Burton county, Ky., and left Henry and a young woman to keep house. We were gone about ten days, and when we returned the young woman appeared not to be in a good humor: Mrs. F. inquired what was the matter: 'Well,' said she, 'I dont want you ever to go away again and leave me here with Henry

Bascom.' 'Why not?' asked Mrs. F. 'Because,' said she, 'he talked me nearly to death.' 'Is it possible,' said Mrs. F. 'What did he talk about?' 'Why, one night at supper he asked me when I expected you home.' 'And was that all?' 'Yes madam;' said the young woman, 'every syllable that he uttered to me during the whole time you were gone.'"

Bascom as a Writer.

Writing was not the talent which he cultivated in chief, and consequently it was not his *forte.* Indeed, for one of his astonishing literary labor, he wrote very little for the press. If we deduct his sermons, lectures, and addresses, which were written merely as a preparation for the pulpit and desk, we have only a few conference reports, his "Methodism and Slavery," his articles in the Quarterly, and a few fugitive pieces as the sum of what he wrote for publication; and nearly all of these were written hurriedly, and under a press of other cares and labors. His published productions exhibit more of the speaker than of the author — they lack the pruned chasteness of the practiced and finished writer, and are encumbered with a sort of exuberance of language, better suited to public declamation, than to compositions intended to be deliberately read, and subjected to the cool criticism of the eye. Yet, his published produc-

tions have been received with decided favor by the public generally. The truth is, that there is enough of the wealth of thought, strength of reasoning, and brilliancy of expression in his writings, to controvert the minor imperfections of composition.

As a Preacher and Orator,

Dr. Bascom excelled; but his excellence was his own, and peculiar. His sermons were full of thought and sound divinity. The great elements of Christian theology found a place in every discourse, and especially the cardinal doctrine of salvation by faith in the atonement of Christ Jesus was never lost sight of. He was brilliant, to be sure, in a transcendent degree, but he never selected a subject with a view to show off that brilliancy. If his style was sparkling and opulent, diamonds of thought and riches of holy truth supplied more of its splendor and wealth than pomp of diction and creation of fancy. There was in his style a singular blending of power and splendor — of plain truth and lofty eloquence — of didactic theology and glittering ornament — of pointed appeal and elegant rhetoric, not to be met with in that of any other orator.

In his nature there was a most remarkable love of the sublime, which gave direction to his thoughts, feelings, and utterances, and influenced his whole

character. He loved to dwell on subjects of highest sublimity — the government of God, the atonement of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the last judgment, and the glories of Heaven — these were themes in which his very soul seemed to revel with genial ecstasy. And in the works of nature his delight was in corresponding themes and objects. He loved to hold communion with the cloud-crowned mountain, the wild cataract, the surging sea, the dark storm-cloud, the harsh thunder, and the tornado. He loved the beautiful, too, whether in the natural or the moral world, but it was the grand, the sublime, the awful, with which he communed, and from which he drew his deepest draughts of almost terrible inspiration. Baptized into this inspiration, his feelings, his thoughts, his language were sublime, and with the sublimities of religion for his themes, and the sublimities of nature for his illustrations, these sublimed feelings, thoughts and words produced examples of moral sublimity seldom equalled.

That Dr. Bascom employed what critics would call a redundancy of words in his discourses, is not denied, and yet the hearer was seldom willing to part with any of the seeming redundancies; for it appeared necessary to perfect the impression or fully develop the thought elaborated. If he multiplied synonyms in expressing an idea, it did not appear tautology at all, but great thoughts

struggling to clothe themselves in a manner suited to their importance, and if the first term employed appeared inadequate, another with a deeper shade of color or power was added: or the principal term was strengthened by qualifying words, after the model of Paul's "*Far more, exceeding,* and *eternal weight* of *glory*"— where no less than five qualifying terms are employed to give force and effect to the principal one.

The severe critic might find imperfections when he judged the speaker by rules established for forming artificial orators out of minds inferior to Bascom's; but it was hardly proper to judge such a man by rules enacted *by* intellects, and *for* intellects, far below that of the subject of their judgment.

A critic — made such on the model of the schools — once said, after admitting Bascom's superior power as an orator to any man he had ever heard: "He is certainly a great orator, according to the rules of Hugh Blair." "Hugh Blair!" half indignantly responded a greater than the critic; "Hugh Blair, sir, who was really no orator, but a mere maker of artificial orators on a small scale, Hugh Blair would have regarded it the greatest privilege of his life to sit at Bascom's feet and learn the lessons of true oratory."

Few men, however, could hear Bascom in his happier moods of speaking, and keep themselves

sufficiently out of the tornado's track to think of criticism; the sentiment elicited was rather astonishment, ecstasy, conviction or penitence. The excitement was too intense for the colder employment of fault finding. His discourses were full of deep thought, of gorgeous imagery, of ardent fervency; and the understanding, the imagination, the passions, were all at once excited to the intensest degree. His voice was clear, full, and trumpet like: his utterance so rapid that no stenographer ever could succeed in catching his words, yet so remarkably distinct that each individual syllable received its proper articulation and emphasis so fully that it seemed to stand out alone in the dense "forest of words and ideas;" his manner — his elocution, though not formed on artistic rules, was exceedingly forcible and effective; and while he never studied a single gesture, and knew almost nothing of his own gesticulation, and his hearers were in like ignorance, all yet felt that there was a wonderful, often a startling power in his delivery. Is it any matter of astonishment, then, that with all this mighty enginery playing upon him, the hearer ceased to be a critic? or that the excitement, assailing all the citadels of heart and soul at once, should have been extreme and absolutely prostrating? Many a public speaker have I heard to say that he had never been more completely exhausted by his own most laborious

efforts, as by the deep excitement of thought and feeling produced by hearing one of Bascom's best sermons.

No man could deny to Bascom eloquence of a high order without subjecting his understanding or his heart to just impeachment. True eloquence is to be judged, not by its conformity to arbitrary and artistic laws, but by its effects on the minds and hearts of the hearers; and judging by this test, Dr. Bascom's high claims were amply vindicated. Such too was the award of hundreds of thousands who heard him; and "The people," says the eloquent Abbe Maury, "they are the best and only proper judges of our eloquence." Schoolmen may try an orator by their rules; but the people try him by the effects he produces. But in the instance of Dr. Bascom the scholars and the populace rendered the same verdict, and the best orators accorded to him the highest commendation. Mr. Clay, himself a master of eloquence, pronounced Henry Bascom the greatest natural orator of the age, and other orators of fame bore like testimony in his favor.

Preparations for the Pulpit.

His manner of preparing for the pulpit was that adopted — substantially — by nearly all great orators. He had a very strong aversion to reading discourses, as we have before remarked, regarding

it as incompatible alike with the grace and effect of eloquence of the highest order, and was himself reluctantly driven into the habit in the latter part of his life by the force of what seemed to be necessity. He was nearly as much opposed to the practice of reciting sermons or other discourses from memory, as being mere parrot-like oratory, suited only to the calibre of small minds. Having selected his subject he sought all the information necessary to a full and proper understanding of it; and having possessed himself of this, he next fixed on the principal heads and the arrangement. These he wrote down, and expanded to a limited extent — sometimes covering the space of a sheet of paper, at other times comprised on the surface of a common card. With these brief notes in his hand, or placed where he could occasionly glance at them, he entered upon the study of his subject. This he always did walking or riding, and his preference was for a wood or grove to study in.* I have known him to beat a path in a forest, while studying a sermon, that remained unobliterated for many months; and it was no uncommon thing for

* From Dr. H....., an early friend of Dr. B. I have the following: "It was always his custom to walk and study. It would seem that his mind became so surcharged with thought, that his body was impelled to action. He generally betook himself to the woods for mental preparation. I remember an amusing incident in this connection. In 1816, he had gone into a skirt of woods near to where an Irishman was laboring, and it so happened

him to walk his chamber during half the night in preparing for the delivery of a sermon the following day. His study of a sermon was not the study of fine sentences, but his object was to become perfectly imbued with the spirit of his subject — to *feel* the full force and importance of it; believing that to thoroughly *understand* and *feel* a subject is the best preparation for speaking on that subject effectively—impressively. Having possessed himself of the points, the thoughts, the feelings of his subject, he then laid it completely aside, until the hour for appearing before the public, and sought repose or recreation.

From this habit young orators might learn a lesson of instruction. Nothing is more common, perhaps, with public speakers, than to study intensely their subjects up to the moment of appearing in public; the natural effect of which is to weaken, if not prostrate, the mental energies and exhaust excitability, before coming to the point where these must be called fully into action, or the speaker fail. Bascom understood the philosophy of the mind and feelings too well to expend

that he discovered Bascom in his retired promenade. He came running to the house under excitement, and declared there was a 'crazy man in the woods.' How do you know he is crazy? I asked, 'Why sir,' he replied, 'he is quite in a *doldrum*, he has been walking for an hour between two trees, and seems to be wonderfully taken with a deep study; do you think he is quite right in his mind?' Go to church to-morrow, said I, and you may judge whether he is crazy.'

in the *drill* the strength essential to success in the *battle.*

Bascom's Piety.

Bascom made no ostentatious display of piety, and was, therefore, suspected by some of being greatly defective, if not totally destitute, as regards this essential Christian quality. The truth is, that early in life he conceived a strong aversion to a morose sour piety, which he thought savored more of pharasaic affectation than of deep and rational devotion, and was generally the offspring of weakness, hypocrisy, or, at best, of habit, drawn from one or the other of these sources. Few men were more fervid in zeal, or had a higher relish for lively and sensible religious enjoyment in devotion, and no one more enjoyed or was more inspirited by the hearty *amen,* when uttered responsively to the fervent petition offered to Heaven, than he, and no one entered into deeper sympathy with the groans of the penitent, the raptures of the pardoned, and the rejoicings of the happy Christian;* but groans mechanically

* He took peculiar pleasure in witnessing the religious enjoyments of the sons of Ham, with whom he was ever a great favorite. Many a time, at camp meetings, have I known him steal away from the white congregation, to enjoy the religious exercises of the blacks, and to remain listening to their singing and their artless but earnest prayers, long after the whites had gone to rest. On one of these occasions, he found himself in a position rather embarrassing to him,

uttered in devotion, without feeling, and from habit or affectation, he looked upon as sadly out of place in the solemnities of divine worship. "By their fruits ye shall know them," is the rule of judgment prescribed by the Great Teacher; and Bascom's piety is entitled to be tried by this law.

His reverence for the character and name of God was profound and pervading; the Sacred Name he never used in conversation, as many Christians do, and an expression even bordering on irreverence never passed his lips. His reverence for the word and ordinances of God was only less than that entertained for God himself. Of that word and its plenary inspiration, and of those holy ordinances, he was a zealous and able defender;

but one which afforded some amusement to his brethren. It was at B ——— camp meeting: He had retired to bed, but the exciting labors of the day, on the one hand, and the rich tide of devotional melody which still swelled up from the African quarter of the encampment, and rung through the midnight forest, on the other, indisposed him to sleep. He arose, and under cover of the darkness, approached conveniently near to the sable singers. They were singing one of those catches in which the leader sings a short sentence — usually composed impromptu — alone, and then the whole congregation would join in a thundering chorus. The leader went on recounting the blessings and enjoyments of the meeting, and, at length, under the inspiration of a new thought, he broke out — "I've seen Bascom; he's de Master's champion," and the choral response, "Glory, hallelujah, etc.," burst out with fresh fervor. The The leader resumed: "I've heard Bascom; he's de Boanerges," and again came the thundering response, fairly driving Bascom from his lurking place to his tent.

and few have dealt such effectual death blows upon infidelity and pseudo-infidelity.* It was his daily habit, as we have seen, to read the holy scriptures; and he was equally punctual in his attendance on the ordinances of the sanctuary. I never knew him to neglect an opportunity of hearing the word or of commemorating the sacrifice of Christ; and the latter, especially, I never knew him to enjoy without deep and solemn feeling. And when such opportunity did not offer in his own church, he attended the ministrations of other churches, and communed with Christians of other names.

Of his deep devotion to the cause of his Master, and the work of the ministry, he gave the strongest evidence possible. While in this work, he was

* Dr. H——, mentioned before, has furnished me an incident in point, which, though received late and out of its order, is yet worth a place. "In the summer of 1816, at a camp meeting, he was requested to preach a sermon on infidelity. It became noised abroad, and an immense multitude attended to hear him. There was present a noted infidel, who vaunted largely of the triumph of his principles, on the supposed failure,of the youth to defend Christianity. He, at first, took a seat at a distance from the stand, assuming an air of great *hauteur* and arrogance. He listened attentively for half an hour, and then, with seeming unconsciousness, took a position near the speaker. For some minutes he sat motionless as a statue, with a play of unquiet and conflicting emotions on his countenance. He felt, if he felt at all, that he was in the midst of a conflagration, that must consume the last vestige of his hopes. He could hold out no longer against the power of truth, falling, as it did, upon his smitten conscience, and before the sermon was concluded, he was heard to exclaim, 'I give it up.' From that hour, he became penitent, and reformed his life."

enduring the sufferings of poverty, toil and persecution, yet the high road to wealth, fame, and comparative ease was opened to him in secular pursuits, and that too with such reliable guarantees as excluded contingency in the question of success; yet these tempting lures he never considered or debated for a moment.

Strong confidence in the providence and the promises of God, I take to be one of the best evidences of genuine piety; and such a confidence he had in a high trusting degree. And of this what has just been said above, is conclusive. He believed that God had called him to the vocation of the ministry, and that while he was found abiding in the lot assigned him by the Head of the Church, he might safely and confidingly claim the protection of God's providence, and the aid of his promises; but if he departed from this work he lost this high claim, and there was no path of life, however bright and flattering, upon which he dared to enter *alone* — without the promised help of the Lord.

Illustrative of his principle of action, in view of God's providence, is an incident which I shall relate. A special friend of his — a brother minister — had suffered the loss of a good estate, and was reduced to poverty; his salary was not half sufficient to support and educate his family, and he was about to enter on the practice of

another profession, with a most cheering prospect of success. He wrote to Bascom, not so much to ask counsel as to inform him of his determination. Bascom replied: "If God has called you to the work of the ministry, whenever you voluntarily abandon his work, you forfeit his help and protection. Besides, though that profession is honorable, that of the ministry is *most honorable*, and by abandoning it for any other you *relatively* degrade your high vocation — a thing to which I trust no stress of temporal adversity will ever drive you. I might, perhaps with equal reason and equal prospects, pursue a like course; but, poor and embarrassed as I am, I am resolved to have no *client* but Him who at the first employed me to plead the great cause of human salvation; and I know my *fee* will be certain and *large*." His friend felt the force of the rebuke, abandoned his purpose, and has ever since thanked God for the timely admonition.

There was one striking peculiarity in Bascom's confidence in God; whenever he got into deep tribulation, it was his habit, after the manner of Old Testament saints, to make a solemn *vow* to God — a covenant — to be more devoted and faithful if God would grant him the special deliverance. This vow he recorded and preserved, that he might not forget it. I find a number of these vows or covenants, and can but regard it as

remarkable, that in every one of which I have knowledge, "he was heard in the thing he feared." Once it was made for his own recovery when at the point of death, and soon he was well; once for the recovery of a dear friend, for whom there was scarce a hope, and soon the disease was rebuked; once for deliverance when a storm of persecution raged madly, and in a short time his persecutors were put to open shame and publicly confounded; and so of others.

And when he came to the closing scene, his plea still was, "All my trust and confidence is in *Almighty Goodness*, as *revealed in the cross of Christ.*"

His faith was pre-eminently *Christian;* Christ and the cross were never lost sight of. And as he was a man of faith, so was he of prayer. In this, too, he has been misunderstood. Indeed, few men have been so *extensively* known, and at the same time so *imperfectly* known. No one could have more confidence in the efficacy of fervent prayer than Bascom. Secret prayer he constantly attended to. The writer, when occupying the same lodging room with him — as was often the case — has frequently awoke long after midnight and found him wrestling in secret prayer; especially when he had any great difficulty to encounter, or any unusually important work to perform. He regarded secret prayer as an essential part of preparation for the pulpit, and it was the only

preparation he allowed himself to engage in, near the time of entering the pulpit.

A lady of piety and intelligence related to me, many years ago, an incident which may be worth recording in this connection.—"I had heard of Mr. Bascom as an eloquent speaker," said she, "but also as a clerical fop destitute of piety. Under this prejudice I went to hear him, and his first appearance did not satisfactorily discredit the report. While the congregation were singing the hymn preceding the sermon, I watched him attentively. His eye was on vacancy, his brow contracted as if in deep thought, he evidently saw nothing, and so complete appeared to be his abstraction that I feared he would not notice the ending of the hymn; but just as the last stanza was closing, he slightly raised his eyes heavenward, and such a pleading look of supplication I never saw; silently, but most intelligently and imploringly it said — 'Lord, help me, or I sink,' Every vestige of my prejudice was gone, and instantly I began with all my heart to beseech God for help in his behalf."

Finally, if reverence for God, and ardent love of his holy word and ordinances — if a benevolent heart and a charitable hand — if strong confidence in the providence and promises of God — if visiting and ministering comfort to the sick, to the fatherless and widows in their affliction — if a consuming

zeal, and a life of uncommon services and sacrifices in the cause of God and humanity — if a tranquil death, cheered by the hope of the gospel, through the merits of Christ be admissible evidence, then was Bascom's claim to the character of a pious Christian well sustained.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MR. BASCOM'S CONNECTION WITH THE MOVEMENT FOR MODIFYING THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH.

We have seen already that at least as early as 1822* Mr. Bascom's sympathies were with the party that proposed a modification of the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and that for such a bias his mind was specially prepared by a course of treatment towards himself which he regarded as illiberal and unjust. We must now give some farther account of his connection with this movement. This is called for by that candor which should characterize every writer of biography, and perhaps is no less due to the character of Mr. Bascom himself. But in doing this it will be necessary to give a sketch of that movement itself, in general outline.

The agitation arising out of the "Presiding Elder question" in 1820 — aided by the circulation of a monthly periodical devoted to the discussion of the subject — extended itself through

* Mr. Bascom says, in a paper dated April, 1826, that he signed a memorial to the General Conference of 1818, asking modifications in the government of the church. I suppose he refers to a petition on the presiding elder question.

the different departments of the church, so that at the General Conference of 1824, a considerable number of petitions were received, some from local preachers, and some from the laity, praying for modifications in the government of the church, but very much differing as to the nature of existing grievances and defects, and of course proposing the application of different remedies. Those petitions were received with but little favor by the conference, and a response was made to them which many of the petitioners regarded as rather ungracious. They saw, however, at once, that while their prayers were not only different but even conflicting, it would be unreasonable to expect the relief, and indeed impracticable for the conference to grant it. This view of the case suggested, very naturally, the necessity of unity of object and harmony of action in order to success in their enterprise. To devise means for effectuating this object, a meeting was called during the sitting of the General Conference in Baltimore, of such as happened to be present in the city, and friendly to the object, to consult on the subject. That meeting was made up of traveling and local preachers, and laymen, indiscriminately. It was there insisted, that, in order to unity, the "Reformers" must give themselves an associate identity by some form of organization, and that they should have a periodical as a medium of intelligence and communication.

The then existing periodical — "Wesleyan Repository"—was represented as having become offensive by its caustic severity, and must be superseded by a new one, which was to be placed under the supervision of the proposed organization. It was farther agreed that the organization should be styled the Union Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, inasmuch as its avowed object was to promote union among the friends of *reform*, and to keep those who were inclined to secede — of whom there were said to be many in the North — in union with the church. These preliminaries being settled, a committee was appointed to prepare a constitution in accordance with them—at the head of which committee was a talented member of the General Conference, then in session. A constitution was reported and adopted, and by its provisions the new periodical was to bear the rather whimsical name of "The Mutual Rights of the Ministers and Members of the Methodist E. Church," and was to be conducted by a publishing committee of the Union society — in which society any member of the Methodist Episcopal church was eligible to membership.

The new periodical soon went into operation, and for a while was conducted with a reasonable degree of moderation — publishing articles from writers on both sides of the controversy. But after a time a less temperate spirit came in, and articles appeared on both sides manifesting little

or nothing of the gentleness and charity of the gospel. Matters grew worse and worse until the spring of 1827, when a circumstance occurred which tended to excite the parties in a still higher degree. At the annual session of the Baltimore conference of that year one of its members was charged with having read and recommended the periodical under notice — "The Mutual Rights" — and a promise was required of him, that he would not do so in future. Seeming to regard this as an interference with his private and personal rights, he refused to submit to the requirement. The conference, claiming the right to determine what was proper and what improper for its members to circulate, resolved to leave the offender without an appointment during the next year. This proceeding excited a great deal of feeling on the other side; the Baltimore Union society, and several other Union societies, passed resolutions strongly condemning the proceeding of the conference, and several individual writers denounced the proceeding without stint; and among the latter, Mr. Bascom.

When Mr. Bascom went to Baltimore in 1824, as before stated, a large proportion of the acquaintances he formed happened to be among those who were prominent and active in the movements above detailed, and doubtless his feelings were not a little influenced by the sympathy which warm

friendship naturally engenders. He had, I believe, written a few articles for the Mutual Rights before the occurrence of the difficulty above noticed, but, I think, of a general and temperate character, yet he had not identified himself with the reform movement by joining any Union society, or by any similar act. He now heard the report of the proceeding of the Baltimore conference, in the case of Dorsey — the case stated above — and perhaps heard it with some degree of coloring. He did not know the man personally, but he received the strong impression that Dorsey had been illiberally, oppressively dealt with; he understood that Dorsey was poor, that he was in very low health, and had a young family dependent on him. Any one who truly knew Bascom, will not need to be told that such a representation would at once awaken his deepest sympathy for the sufferer, and his indignation against the alleged oppressors.

In such a state of feeling, Bascom wrote a communication for the Mutual Rights respecting the affair, which, it must be confessed, was in some passages exceedingly caustic. These movements in behalf of the "martyr" aroused the other party to still farther action. A public meeting of members of the church was called in the city of Baltimore, at which the proceedings of the conference were zealously defended, and the "sympa-

thizers" denounced with great severity; and the article of Mr. Bascom, particularly, was branded as one which "outraged all decency of language, and applied to the conference the most abusive epithets to which malignity itself could resort." This, of course, did not tend to soothe Mr. Bascom's feelings, or to draw him into closer connection with the dominant party.

In writing his views of the case, he had brought up a certain tribunal, long since abolished, in illustration of the matter in hand. One who set up higher pretensions, reviewed his article with great severity, and particularly sneered at his ignorance of the character of the tribunal to which he had referred, alleging in substance that he understood nothing of its character and objects. This brought Bascom out with such an array of authentic evidence, proving his entire correctness, as effectually silenced his assailant. But this victory was, in a sense, a defeat: it made for him a powerful enemy.

Matters at last grew to such a pitch, that in August of this year, (1827,) official proceedings were instituted in Baltimore against a number of local ministers and members, with a view to bring them to abandon the Union society and the Mutual Rights, or to exclude them from the church. A very large proportion of the arrests were among Bascom's most special friends in the

city. This tended still more to strengthen his sympathetic union with them.

In November, 1827, a general convention of the friends of *Reform* met in the city of Baltimore, and adopted a memorial to be presented to the ensuing General Conference — which was to meet in May, 1828 — praying for certain modifications in the government of the church.

Soon after this a large meeting was held in the same city, which adopted a sort of protest or bill of exceptions to the proceedings had in the case of the arrested members and preachers, on the ground of their supposed inconsistency with the spirit or letter of the discipline of the church.

Immediately after this, followed the excommunication of the members, and soon after, the *ministers* who had been put on their trial for their connection with the Union society and the Mutual Rights. This was immediately succeeded by the withdrawal of a large number of the relatives and friends of the expelled persons, and their temporary organization into a society, based on Mr. Wesley's General Rules, to await the decisions and results of the coming General Conference.

It was earnestly hoped, that the General Conference might be able to open the way for the restoration of the expelled ministers and members, and for healing the wound which had become so deep and wide. Many, on both sides of the con-

troversy, were very anxious for this; they were weary of strife, and longed for peace. Mr. Bascom was a member of that General Conference, and employed his best efforts to bring about that result. To this end, he drew up the following paper, and presented it to the chairman of the committee having charge of that class of business:

"*Pittsburg May* 19, 1828.

"DEAR BROTHER: — The brethren who have been expelled the church in Baltimore, will, and do hereby concede, that publications may have appeared in the Mutual Rights, the nature and character of which were inflammatory, and so far do not admit of vindication; that individuals and facts, for want of proper information, may have been unintentionally misrepresented. They regret these things, in every existing case. They agree, that the Mutual Rights shall be discontinued at the filling up of the present volume, in doing which they will avoid just cause of offence to any brethren. That Union societies shall, by their advice and influence, be abolished, and no more formed.

"These concessions are made through us, in behalf of reformers generally, to aid the work of conciliation, as conditions for the restoration of the expelled brethren in Baltimore and elsewhere, to the church, on terms respectful to all parties. By these concessions, they are not to be understood as relinquishing the freedom of speech and of the press, which they enjoy in common with their brethren; nor of peaceably assembling for proper and justifiable purposes. We concur in the above.

A. SHINN,
H. B. BASCOM,
NICHOLAS SNETHEN,
CHARLES AVERY,
HENRY D. SELLERS."

Towards the close of the conference, a preamble was adopted, setting forth the existing difficulties and facts in the case, as the grounds of their action, followed by two resolutions, the first of

which, in view of an adjustment of the difficulties, recommends, that no farther proceedings should be had against the reformers, and the second provides, that if any of the expelled persons would make the concessions expressed in the foregoing paper — though the existence of that document is not recognized — they might be restored to the church; *provided*, that the quarterly conference and the preacher in charge of the circuit or station should consent to such restoration; and provided, also, that the preacher in charge should be under no obligation to restore a member to any official station he may have held previously, and provided, that no other *periodical* devoted to the controversy should be established, but allowing individuals to publish what they chose on their own responsibilty

These *provisos*, and especially the first, were unacceptable to the expelled members, inasmuch as it put it into the power, as they alleged, of those who had expelled them to prevent their restoration; or, if they choose, to restore some and reject others, and so divide and scatter them.*

Here, then, ended the attempt at conciliation, and not long after the adjournment of the General

* I find, by a letter from Mr. Snethen, that he regards it as a principal cause of the failure of this measure, that while the paper, signed by himself and others — quoted above — admits, that articles unjustifiably severe, *may have* appeared in the Mutual Rights, the conference resolution required the expelled persons to acknowledge that such articles actually *have* appeared, etc.

Conference, the work of expulsion, was resumed at new points.

In the autumn of 1828, a general convention was held, at which articles of association were adopted for the proposed new ecclesiastical organization, — which took the name of the "Associated Methodist Churches." With this convention and these organizing measures, Mr. Bascom had no connection, but went on regularly in the performance of the duties assigned him as a traveling preacher of the Methodist Episcopal Church. True, he sympathized with his friends, and felt rather sore himself, from denunciations aimed against him by the dominant party, and especially from a contemptuous philippic inflicted on him on the floor of the General Conference — or at least, what he regarded in that light.

In the autumn of 1830, the newly organized Associated Methodist churches, sent up delegates to another general convention, the object of which was to frame a regular constitution for the new connection, — which was thenceforth styled the Methodist Protestant Church. With this last convention, the name of Mr. Bascom has been, in an indirect manner, associated, as being the author of a "Declaration of Rights" which was published with the proceedings of the connection, though not adopted by that body.

The facts in this case are as follow: a short

time before the meeting of the convention, a prominent member of the new organization, and a special friend of Mr. Bascom, wrote to him suggesting that the convention would probably adopt a declaration of rights, and requesting him to prepare and forward such an instrument to be laid before the convention. Bascom consented to undertake the work; and to be the more fully prepared for it, he visited Cincinnati, procured the "Federalist" and some other books, and, that he might be entirely secluded, he retired to a country inn, a few miles back of the city, and there shut himself up until his work was completed. This done, the paper was forwarded to his friend, and by him laid before the convention. The name of the author was not announced in the convention, but generally it was attributed to the true source. It arrived at a late period of the convention, and this served as a pretext for not receiving it; but the better reason was no doubt correctly stated by those who alleged that the convention was not quite so dependent as to be obliged to receive important aid from one, who was not even identified with the new organization, and who, probably, never would become so. The Declaration was, therefore, rejected by the convention, but the book agent, regarding it as a valuable document, added it at the end of the new discipline, and it was published in various other forms.

In November, 1830, the new church commenced the publication of a periodical in the west, and, at the solicitation of its conductors, Mr. Bascom became a contributor, and wrote seven numbers on the rights and duties of the Christian ministry. These numbers dealt almost exclusively in general principles, and referred in no direct way, to the existing controversy. In March, 1831, appeared the last of these numbers, and the last of Mr. Bascom's writings, respecting the questions involved in the controversy. He wrote anonymously, but being suspected of writing the "Letters of Paul on the Ministry," he was complained of before the conference of which he was a member. He confessed the writing of the "letters," but pleaded that he only laid down historical facts and general principles, and nothing directly against the Methodist E. Church. And here the matter ended, — at least, this is my recollection of the affair.*

It is not the business of the biographer, as I

* A communication on this subject, written by him for the Pittsburgh conference of 1831, says — "I owe it to myself and to you, to say, that a course of conduct has been ascribed to me, and complained of as inconsistent with the relation I sustain to you, and the obligations I owe you. I have to say, that the part I have acted, does not sustain the truth of the complaint, and that no act of mine can be construed, as I believe, into a violation of the obligations I owe to you and the church. I certainly intended no such violation, but on the other hand, was disposed to avoid every thing of the kind, and I am compelled to think, that under all the circumstances, the alleged offence exists but in seeming, and not in fact. And as the acts alluded to, were intended to benefit one portion of society, without

conceive, to defend or condemn the opinions of him whose life he writes, yet it may not be improper to state what is certainly known of Mr. Bascom's opinions and the ground of them, as also the reasons which governed him in his particular course of action.

Whatever opinions Mr. Bascom entertained at variance with the polity of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I am satisfied, may be traced to two positions which he assumed as correct, and perhaps fundamental. These were, (1), that *order* in the ministry necessarily implies a divine institute; and,

injuring any other, I cannot think that my conduct merits chastisement, farther than an expression of opinion opposed to my views, by those from whom I may happen to dissent upon questions unsettled by the decisions of revelation. As motive and character were not assailed by me, I cannot consent that mine in return should be assailed, in the instance alluded to, without the remonstrance of candor and conviction, which become the right of every man under suitable circumstances. No alienation of the parties concerned, was contemplated at the time, nor in prospect, and I sincerely hope, that none will be urged.

"I suggested an interview last evening with Bishop Hedding, and twelve or thirteen members of this conference, the object of which was to discuss amicably my relations to this conference, and thus prepare the way for my dismissal from this, and removal to another, with those views and feelings which always become us as brethren and ministers. On this subject, therefore, I refer you to Bishop Hedding, and brethren Young, Fleming, Elliott, Monroe, Lambden, Skarp, Moore, Mack, Limerick, Waterman, Cook, and Brunson. Such reference, under all the circumstances involved, I trust, will be satisfactory. I have only to add, may mutual forgiveness obliterate mutual injury, and may the mantle of charity cover reciprocal wrongs, — if such have existed. I leave you in peace, and it is the first and last wish of my heart, that the God of peace may be with us all."

(2), that the church is a voluntary association precisely as a civil government is.

In his fourth letter on the ministry he assumes, that in the ministry as instituted by Christ Jesus, there was "perfect equality of rank" — that the office of deacon was "purely secular" — that "bishops and presbyters were identically the same in *office* and *function*," and hence infers that all *imparity* in the ministry is created in contravention of the arrangements settled in the church by its Head. Had he adopted the opinion that Christ did not settle *orders* in the ministry at all, but simply the ministry, broadly leaving the distribution of its powers into orders to the church's discretion, his premises had conducted him to no such conclusion as he reached. With his views, however, believing that episcopacy as a distinct order was not instituted by Christ, he of course regarded it as spurious and unwarrantable. But he became convinced that, in this view of the subject, he was in error. In a letter addressed to the writer, March 1850, Mr. Bascom says: — "The attempt, some twenty years since, to make it appear that our episcopacy was valid, because derived from anterior forms of episcopal jurisdiction, proved so revolting to my understanding and reason, that I doubted for some time seriously, whether I could honestly remain a party to an assumption so ridi culous, and, as I believed, mischievous in tendency.

But so soon as I became satisfied that ours is a *legitimate presbyterial episcopacy*, instituted and created as a separate, distinct *order*, by *conventional* consent, and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, and that in order to its validity it was not necessary to invoke the miserable humbug of regular episcopal succession, as independent of the rights and powers of the body of presbyters, I was content to await the results of time and inquiry, and each succeeding year has but tended to confirm me in the correctnes of my views." He adds: — "We assume that in the matter of mere organic form, as it regards government, the scriptures have left the church to its own judgment, and that according to the scriptures, ecclesiastical history, and the practice of the best churches of antiquity and of modern times, it is competent for a church to originate an organic law, like that giving birth to Methodist episcopacy, without any departure from the New Testament or ecclesiastical usage." Here we perceive what views of the subject Mr. Bascom entertained at the time of the controversy — into which views he says in the letter quoted above — he was lead by "unsafe guides," meaning our writers on episcopacy, and which views came near causing him to leave the communion of the church, regarding the theory of our writers, and the organization of the church as incompatible with each other.

The other point of difficulty, not to say error, with Mr. Bascom was, overlooking the fact, that in instituting a church on earth, Christ committed the whole duty of preaching the gospel, of administering the sacraments, and, therefore, of receiving members into the church, to the hands of the ministry; that the gospel ministry was *before* church organization, and has ever gone forward in advance of it, from the beginning until now. Failing to recognize any original and vested rights in the ministry by the Divine commission, Mr. Bascom very naturally regarded the organization of a church as being absolutely subject to the control of the will of the populace, precisely as people organizing a civil government adopt just such laws and forms as they may prefer, there being no one divinely commissioned to act in the premises in any manner different from every other member of the entire community.

In accordance with this view of the subject, he says, in the 9th article of his Declaration of Rights, "Ministers and private Christians, according to the New Testament, are entitled to *equal rights* and *privileges*." If it be the *right and privilege* of ministers to preach the gospel, to administer the sacraments, to receive converts into the church by the initiatory ordinance of baptism, and to form them into religious organizations; if these rights and privileges were committed to the

ministry, specifically, by Jesus Christ, and were not committed to the membership at large, then there must be some mistake in the broad and unqualified declaration, that "ministers and private members are, by the New Testament, placed on a ground of strict equality;" and so thought Mr. Bascom before he died.

His famous Declaration of Rights was written in full view of these two positions; and yet it is much more generalizing and abstract in its averments than might have been expected from such premises. Indeed the *title* of the instrument itself is quite general and vague—"Declaration of Rights, explanatory of the reasons and principles of *government;*" but what sort of government even is not specified. Much of it applies properly only to civil governments, some portion is aimed against such ecclesiastical usurpations and abuses as are scarcely to be looked for this side of Rome, and some of its positions are most sound and excellent, whether applied to civil or ecclesiastical government.

A question has often been put, and especially by the Reformers, as they were called: "If Mr. Bascom was in general sentiment and sympathy with that party, why did he not secede from the Methodist Episcopal Church, and unite with the new organization?" I am not bound to know all his reasons, but some light may possibly be cast on the subject. He had never been connected

with any Union Society, nor with any of the conventions, and seems to have thought it expedient to await the result of the organizing measures of the new church, and not identify himself with it unless he believed it, on the whole, better calculated to do good and advance the cause of vital religion than the old church. He felt free to act as a pacificator, as at the General Conference of 1828; but never having acted as a leader in the original movement, he did not feel bound to take any part in the organizing measures. The convention of 1828 adopted only a temporary bond of union, under which societies might form if they chose, but from this platform* nothing could be certainly known of what the church would be when

*Respecting those articles of confederation, a leading layman of B.... ., writes to Bascom in the year after its adoption, "Very few, except some local preachers, approve of them"— (the articles of association.) A distinguished minister, who had identified himself with the party, in feeling and action, writes "that he cannot unite under such a bond of union." Another minister, who had been active in Union Societies, conventions, etc., says to him: "Situated as I am, I have felt bound to unite with the persecuted party; but your different relation may not impress a like conviction of duty on your mind." As late as 1833, a gentleman, among the most prominent in that church, inquires of Bascom about his church relations, and says, that whatever he might see proper to do in the future, there had, up to that date, been no time when it would have been proper for him to withdraw from the Methodist Episcopal Church. And yet, before the writing of this letter, by one who understands the subject much better than the multitude, Bascom had been repeatedly denounced, publicly and privately, as a changeling, a coward, because he had not done what a leader of the organization said it would have been improper for him to do.

finally and fully organized. Finally, when the convention of 1830 formed a constitution and discipline as a regular church, there were leading features in that organization, of which he could not approve. Particularly this, that while it raised strong walls — on paper — to guard its itinerancy, he believed that it had incorporated into it those elements which must necessarily render its itinerancy inefficient, and probably short-lived; because, as he said, while *itinerancy* was legally guarded, *itinerants* were without adequate securities and encouragement — the working men in the itinerancy being put under the control of those who had no part in their peculiar toils and trials.

I know it has been said that these objections were but a *ruse* to cover his retreat, but this is judging harshly, for some of those most prominent in the movement, from the beginning were far from being satisfied with some leading principles on which the new church was organized, though their relation to it was such that they did not feel at liberty to retreat, but rather to hold on and try to remedy the evils they could not prevent. And that I may not be regarded as drawing a fancy sketch, I have a letter before me from which I will make a few extracts. That letter is from one who was more prominent in the reform movement, from the very beginning, than any other

man — one who united with the new church, and never withdrew from it. It was written after the adoption of the constitution, and before the meeting of the first General Conference, held under it.* He says:

"All my bonds of duty to this Protestant Church, are, of course, dissolved. I am dead to it, and I die with a clear conscience. The cause, I fear, will go down. On the east side of the mountain I saw nothing but gloom and discouragement; and I see little in the west, notwithstanding our increase, to minister much relief to my fears. In the coming General Conference, what can we do? Are not our hands tied?" After a few remarks respecting the General Conference, he adds: "I think I foresee, that if it be not agreed on to call a new convention, the first General Conference will be the last. You can have no idea what a rope of sand we be unless you see our strength tried. Under the touch of contention we fall to pieces. All fear of self-destruction is lost in our zeal against the common enemy. The

*Remarks of an illiberal and censorious character having been made and published against Bishop Bascom, since his death, with much more freedom than before that lamented event, his biographer has felt called on by a sense of duty to vindicate his memory against charges of insincerity and selfishness, as silence under such circumstances would be liable and likely to be construed into acquiescence; and he has therefore selected the accompanying testimony from a large amount of like character in his possession — wishing only, as the representative of the dead, to act defensively.

philosophy of government has no place among us." If one of the fathers and founders of the new church could write thus about it presently after the adoption of its constitution, is it unreasonable to suppose that that constitution may have impressed Mr. Bascom's mind alike unfavorably, and of course prevented him from entering a union which its earliest friend styles a "rope of sand."*

Under a conviction, that the new organization was less safe and stable than the old, Mr. Bascom resolved to abide where he was. And a calmer survey of the whole ground convinced his mind, that he had been in error respecting the two capital propositions noticed above, and that there

* In 1839, a rumor having crossed the mountains, to the effect that the late Rev. Mr. S. . ., contemplated a re-union with the Methodist Episcopal Church, the writer, at the instance of Rev. J. R. W., and others in B., had a conversation on the subject with Mr. S., at his own house in Alleghany city, in July of that year. His reply was in his own peculiar style of candor and clearness: "You are well aware," said he, "that I do not regard our government as perfect, nor what I wished and hoped it would be, and there are, it appears to me, influences — if not principles — at work, calculated to prevent the perfecting of it; yet, there was a principle involved in my uniting with the new church, which I deem it important to maintain, and while I believe that this principle can be better sustained in my present relation than by a change, I expect to remain. That principle is not directly republican freedom in church government, but individual freedom of speech and action respecting matters of church government. Had the latter not been invaded, I could not have felt justified in forsaking the communion of the church to secure the former." Such were the sentiments, and very nearly the exact words of his reply; and he expressed himself very explicitly to others on the same subject, and to the same effect.

was really less error and imperfection in the primary elements of Methodist Episcopal Church government, than in the interpretation and application of those principles.

Mr. Bascom had a right to sympathize with the "reformers," and to co-operate with them to the extent of his convictions of duty and propriety; he did so, and, of course, incurred the censure of the dominant party. When a secession took place, it was his unquestionable right to judge and decide whether the old or the new organization was better, and whether it was his duty, under all existing circumstances, to unite with the latter or abide with the former; and after mature reflection, and calculating the relative probabilities of stability and usefulness, as between the two churches, and his own prospect of doing good, he decided against a change of his church relation. This he did in the most quiet and least offensive manner possible: he announced no purpose, at any time, to secede, and he proclaimed no intention to remain where he was, but simply stood still. He bestowed his labors under the direction of the old church, but heartily rejoiced in the success of the new, in winning souls to Christ; and his personal friendships were bestowed indiscriminately among the members of both. It was his right, on conviction of error or mistake, to change his opinions too hastily adopted; and this he did.

but so prudently and inoffensively to the feelings of others, that, except to one confidential friend, I believe he avowed no change of opinion, publicly or privately, for near twenty years after the secession.

His continuance in the Methodist Episcopal Church disappointed some of his friends on the other side; not that he had promised to secede, but that they expected it, and hence censure was cast on him, on account of his course. Yet, during his lifetime, this was hardly so abundant or so bitter as he expected; and to whatever of it there was, he made no reply, no complaint. It is believed that he was never heard to utter a word unfriendly to the Methodist Protestant Church, nor to do an act that could prejudice her interests or reputation; so, if it could be said that he was reviled, it can be said, he reviled not again.

The freedoms taken with his name and confidential correspondence, since his death, has brought out nothing to his discredit, and will detract as little from his fair fame, as it will add to that of the actors in the affair.

In this matter, all that can be said of Dr. Bascom, is, that in a period of thirty years, he changed some of his opinions respecting things non-essential; and he who has read and thought for thirty years, without changing any of his opinions, has had none of his own to change.

CHAPTER XXIV

MR. BASCOM'S CONNECTION WITH THE CONTROVERSY ON SLAVERY.

In 1812, as we have seen, Bishop Asbury convinced Mr. Bascom, that slavery was to be treated as a civil institution, and with due regard to the laws of the states where it existed, and that conflict with the civil authorities was to be avoided in church action on the subject; and in accordance with this teaching, we find him, in 1819, earnestly opposing the majority of the Tessessee conference, when that body refused ordination or admission into the itinerancy to preachers who were the owners of slaves, in States which did not permit the emancipation, and we have seen his name on the protest entered up against those proceedings. The General Conference of 1820 repealed the rule allowing annual conferences "to make their own regulations relative to buying and selling slaves;" and this, it is understood, was brought about by the counter action of the minority of the Tennessee conference, with which Bascom was concerned.

From this time forward to 1836, the subject

attracted little attention, and elicited no General Conference action worth recording; but in the General Conference of this year, modern abolitionism commenced that unhealthy agitation on the subject of slavery, which has ever since been fermenting up the most unhappy results. Several northern delegates publicly lectured in favor of abolitionism during the session of the conference, and produced much excitement. This proceeding induced the conference to take up the subject; and after a full and elaborate discussion, adopted a preamble and resolutions expressive of its sense on this point. The first resolution condemned the conduct of the delegates who had lectured in advocacy of abolitionism. The second declares the conference to be "decidedly opposed to modern abolitionism, and wholly disclaims any right, wish, or intention to interfere in the civil and political relation between master and slave, as it exists in the slaveholding States in this Union." The pastoral address of the conference treated the subject, according to these views, at considerable length. The action of the conference was taken by the decisive vote of one hundred and twenty in favor to fourteen against it; yet the agitation went on, and particularly in New England.

To the General Conference of 1840, there were sent up a large number of petitions and memorials on the subject of slavery, which were referred to a

committee, consisting of one member for each annual conference. Of this committee, Dr. Bangs was chairman, and Dr. Bascom was a member. They appear not to have made any general report, and the partial one they did make, seems to have received no final action. This was probably owing to the fact, that the subject came up, and was elaborated, reported, and acted on in the cases of the colored testimony resolutions, and in the Westmoreland case. In the first, a preacher had received the testimony of a colored person, against a white member under trial, in a state where such testimony could not be admitted by the civil tribunals; and for this, his conference decided that he was guilty of maladministration. From this decision he took an appeal to the General Conference, and that body refused to sustain the annual conference in its decision. Subsequently, the late Dr. Few, introduced the following resolution: "Resolved, that it is inexpedient and unjustifiable for any preacher among us to permit colored persons to give testimony against white persons, in any state where they are denied that privilege in trials at law." This resolution, after being freely discussed, was adopted by a large majority; but, a few days afterward, another debate sprang up, on motion to reconsider the vote adopting this resolution. Finally, Bishop Soule submitted a series of resolutions on the subject which secured

the support of a very large majority of the conference.

The Westmoreland case was this;—a number of local preachers memorialized the General Conference, setting forth that they resided in a part of the state of Virginia that was under the jurisdiction of the Baltimore conference,—that they were the owners of slaves, and that the laws of the state in which they lived, would not permit them to manumit their slaves, and that on this account alone, the Baltimore conference had refused them ordination. This, they regarded as a violation of the law of the discipline, which did not intend to inflict penalties or impose disabilities on account of their not doing an act forbidden by the law of the state. The case was referred to a select committee, of which Dr. Bascom was chairman.*

Near the close of the conference, Dr. Bascom read a full argumentative report, concurring entirely in the views of the case taken by the petitioners, and concluding with the following explicit resolution:

"*Resolved*, by the delegates of the annual conferences, in General Conference assembled, That under the provisional exception of the general

* It is worthy of notice, that the chairman of this committee, was requested by at least some of the bishops, if not all, so to frame his report as to cover fully the principle involved, and to serve as a rule of action thereafter. The report and resolution were written with this view, and it is confidently believed, that the conference had the same object in view in adopting the document.

rule of the church, on the subject of slavery, the simple holding of slaves, or mere ownership of slave property, in states or territories where the laws do not admit of emancipation, and permit the liberated slave to enjoy freedom, constitutes no legal barrier to the election or ordination of ministers to the various grades of office, known in the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and cannot, therefore, be considered as operating any forfeiture of right in view of such election and ordination."

This action appeared to settle an important rule for the construction of law, and its practical application in the administration; but so thought not the Baltimore conference, for the correction of whose administration it was specially designed; for though their delegates made no objection to its passage, they refused utterly to be governed by it—as we shall see presently.

Rev. Dr. G. Peck says, that he was opposed to the report and resolution at the time, [we have heard of no other negative votes,] and adds—"I thought it an artful document, which required time for examination and analysis. I saw that the resolution especially, was so worded, that it might be pressed into the service of a slave holding episcopacy." *Slavery and Episcopacy*, p. 33.

Without pausing to enquire, why the General Conference so readily adopted a report, in which

the sagacity of at least one member detected artfulness and danger, we will take the testimony on the same subject of the venerable Dr. Bangs, the historian of the church. In his history of the Methodist Church, vol. iv, p. 404, he says, — "A very able report was adopted near the conclusion of the conference, on the subject of ordaining ministers in slave-holding states who own slaves, and will not liberate them from their bondage. This arose out of the practice of the Baltimore conference, in refusing to ordain some local preachers, who lived in the state of Virginia, where they pleaded that the laws would not permit emancipation. As this subject had never before been so fully investigated, and as the report, drawn up by Dr. Bascom, very clearly unfolds the principiples by which the church has ever been governed upon this grave and important question, I think the reader will be pleased to have the entire report before him." He then copied the whole report into his history.

It was, at any rate, the legal act of the highest judicatory of the church, and one would suppose, entitled to be respected as such; and it is, therefore, not very material, whether we regarded Dr. Bangs, — acting as the calm, impartial historian, or Dr. Peck — acting as a partizan advocate — as the more reliable authority, respecting the real character of that action.

From this time until the General Conference of 1844, the excitement on this vexed question, seemed to be much quieted down, and particularly so, after a few leading abolitionists at the north had seceded from the church, so much so, that through the south and south-west, it was confidently expected that the General Conference of 1844 would have no annoyance, or none of a serious character, from that quarter. But this portentous quiet was but the calm which precedes the fearful earthquake; for after the conference became organized, on the very first call of the chair for petitions and memorials, between seventy-five and one hundred were presented on the subject of slavery, and the whole aspect of affairs showed conclusively, that the north had prepared for determined and vigorous action.

But now an unanticipated circumstance changed the scene of action and the mode of warfare. A member of the Baltimore conference, Mr. Harding, had married a lady, who was the owner of several slaves, and as the laws of Maryland did not permit him to emancipate them in that state, he felt himself protected entirely by the church law, as defined and applied by the action of the General Conference of 1840, already noticed. But the Baltimore conference required Mr. Harding to emancipate the slaves, regardless of the laws of the state, and the action of the preceding General

Conference. Neither party would yield, and the result was, that Mr. Harding was suspended from the exercise of his ministerial functions, by the conference. From this decision he took up his appeal to the General Conference. Abolitiondom rejoiced in this, as greatly aiding the "good cause." The Baltimore conference had constantly acted with the south in opposition to the ultraism of the north, but the abolitionists now at once saw that by setting aside the church law as interpreted by the General Conference of 1840, the Baltimore conference, their old adversary—adopted their own principles substantially, and became the leader in an attack on the south. The front was changed. Baltimore took the lead, and New England only followed. The result, of course, was, that the decision of the Baltimore conference, was sustained triumphantly—117 to 56. The abolitionists could not but regard this as a great victory. To be sure, they had quarrelled with the discipline as giving general protection to slavery; but if the *conservatives* could devise a way by which they could make the discipline mean all *without* change, that they sought *by* a change, the road to this goal was made so much the more short and easy. And if the *conservatives* would but declare it sinful in a *minister* to obey the laws of his state, where slavery was concerned, common sense would point to the conclusion, that what was sinful in a

minister, could not be entirely innocent in a private *member*.

This victory very naturally emboldened the abolitionists to undertake a more important one; and accordingly Bishop Andrew was selected as the victim. He had inherited a slave, one had been bequeathed to him — both without his concurrence — and he had married a lady who was the owner of several slaves; and according to the laws of the state in which he lived, if he attempted to emancipate those slaves, they would be taken up and sold into perpetual bondage, and he would be subjected to a large amercement or fine in each case. But, no matter, he was legally a slaveholder, and this could not be tolerated. After a most protracted discussion, he was virtually suspended from the exercise of his office as a bishop of the church.

However abolitionists and others might rejoice in this success, the delegates from the southern conferences could not fail to perceive, that if they silently submitted to this action, the days of Methodism were numbered in the south, and Methodist preachers would be completely cut off from the confidence of masters, and from access to the slaves.

It was a critical conjuncture; the abolitionists declared that the north would secede rather than submit to a slaveholding bishop; the south

believed that acquiescent submission to the degradation of a bishop for such a cause and under such circumstances would be their ruin. The *middle men*, or *conservatives*, as they loved to call themselves, held the balance of power. They had acted conservatively with the south in 1836 and 1840; but, unfortunately, they had themselves originated the present difficulty, and they were thus thrown into necessary alliance with the abolitionists. The south was driven to the wall, and had nothing left but to protest and declare against the proceeding. Accordingly, the southern delegates, who had, throughout the discussion, assured the conference that, if the proposed action were taken against Bishop Andrew, separation would become inevitable, now presented a declaration to the effect, that the action of the conference, and, particularly, that in virtually suspending Bishop Andrew from his office, "must produce a state of things in the south, which renders a continuance of the jurisdiction of this General Conference over those conferences, inconsistent with the success of the ministry in the slaveholding states." They also gave notice of an intention to enter their formal and solemn protest against the doings of the conference; but as such a protest must be a strong argumentative document, and not a simple expression of dissent, Dr. Bascom was selected as the most proper person to prepare the protest.

Dr. Bascom was one of the last, and I think the very last man of the southern delegates to come into those measures, which, he felt assured, would issue in a division; but when fully convinced that these measures were essential to the well-being of the south, as he was not a man to do things by the halves, he entered with resoluteness and zeal upon what he regarded as the discharge of unpleasant but solemn duty. He, therefore, promptly signed the declaration referred to above, which elicited the plan of separation; and in preparing the protest, he entered elaborately and argumentatively into the bearings and consequences of the position taken by the General Conference. He attempted to show how the south must be affected by that action, and to point out the particulars wherein the majority had adopted theories and maxims of government to meet the occasion, which were at variance with the principles of justice and the settled usages of American Methodism. It is certainly a powerful document; and that the General Conference regarded it in this light, is evident from the fact, that that body felt it necessary so far to depart from the usage of deliberative assemblies, as to appoint a committee of its most able members to prepare a *reply* to the protest. From these two documents — if they may be regarded as expressing the sense of the respective parties — it appears, that

the emergency had either originated or developed two very opposite theories of government, and especially of episcopacy, as being held by the two parties.

In the following autumn, (1844,) Dr. Bascom read to his own annual conference, a long and elaborate expose of the whole affair, intended, especially, as a *rejoinder* to the reply of the General Conference Committee. The views embodied in this document, he afterwards amplified into a book of considerable size, which was published the year following, under the title of "Methodism and Slavery: with other matters in controversy between the north and the south; being a review of the manifest of the majority, in reply to the protest of the minority of the late General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the case of Bishop Andrew."

Whatever may be thought of the peculiar doctrines contained in this book, candor demands the acknowledgment, that it contains an amount of information on the subject of which it treats, much greater than is to be found in any other volume of equal size. The research displayed in it is indeed astonishing. That it is deficient in arrangement, order, classification, and runs on more in the manner of a continuous speech — which it originally was — than a well-arranged book, is not to be denied, yet no man but Bascom

could have collected and thrown together the matter even as it is, and especially under a constant pressure of other labors and duties. This work elicited uninvited commendation of a high order from some of the mightiest minds of the age; such men, for example, as the late John C. Calhoun, Henry Clay, and others, the first of whom pronounced it superior to anything that had appeared on the subject.

This book called out an answer from a member of the committee, which framed the reply to the protest, under the title of "Slavery and Episcopacy," etc. It contained a good deal of special pleading and small criticism, with many things which, in the earlier history of the church, would have been thought rather strange in a Methodist production.

In May, 1845, a General Convention of Delegates, from the southern annual conferences, assembled in the city of Louisville, Kentucky, to consider and determine on the necessity and expediency of forming a Southern Methodist Episcopal Church, under the provisional plan of separation. There was but one great item of business to be transacted, and, of course, one general committee; the chairmanship of this committee — the committee on southern organization — was the post of difficulty and distinction, and this post was promptly assigned to Dr. Bascom.

This committee consisted of thirty members,

including a large proportion of the talent of the convention; but after a few meetings and a free interchange of views, the whole business of preparing the report, was left to the chairman. The convention met on the first day of May, and on the 15th, Dr. Bascom read his report to the convention, in the presence of a large concourse of spectators; and it was received with great cordiality, and indeed enthusiasm, and adopted by the unanimous votes of the convention, with the exception of only two members.

The ability and importance of this document would entitle it to a place in this work; but to guard against undue enlargement we are compelled to exclude this with some other documents which we would like to insert. But as these have all been published and are accessible to such as wish to read them; their exclusion is, on that account, the less to be regretted.

In 1848, Dr. Bascom, with the other Commissioners of the South, attended the session of the Northern General Conference; but not finding themselves able to accomplish anything desirable in the way of adjusting the difficulties between the two connections, they retired, and agreed to lay the matter before the public in the form of a "Brief Appeal to Public Opinion, in a series of exceptions to the course and action of the Methodist Episcopal Church, from 1844 to 1848,

affecting the Rights and Interests of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South." This Appeal was written by Dr. Bascom, but, of course, also signed by his colleagues, Drs. Green and Parsons. That it manifests ability of a high order, is not to be questioned; yet are there in it expressions of severity, which, doubtless, he would willingly have erased when he come to die. Indeed, on his dying bed he said: "I have acted throughout this whole controversy under an imperative sense of duty, and, bating the use of a few *terms*, have nothing to regret, nothing to retract."

Firmly believing his cause just, and that he was advocating the right, it was natural with him to be led by his zeal into the use of exceptionably strong language, which, upon reflection, he would be disposed to revoke. But had he lived to finish that work of adjustment, no man would have more heartily rejoiced, or more deeply sympathized, in the noble spirit of reciprocal magnanimity which has, since the first part of his biography went to press, brought about an amicable adjustment of the chief difficulty between the two great branches of the American Methodist family, and which caused him so much labor and care. That it might be the harbinger of a better feeling and a closer union between the kindred parties would have been his fervent wish and prayer, as it is of every true hearted Methodist and Christian.

APPENDIX

BASCOM AS A PROFESSOR.

As it regards the manner in which he discharged the duties of his professorship, we may call in the following testimony of one of his students, — now a distinguished professional gentleman of the south:

If Dr. Bascom succeeded well as President of Transylvania University, he succeeded still better in his chair as Professor. We shall devote this paper to a portraiture of him in this capacity. He took charge only of the senior class. He taught Mental and Moral Science, and Political Economy, and lectured daily on Natural Theology, Evidences of Christianity, and Constitutional and International Law.

His instructions were unique, full of interest, and exceedingly attractive. He would not be satisfied with a superficial acquaintance with any subject presented, on the part of a student. He sought to cultivate views the widest, the most searching, and the most comprehensive.

I can hardly imagine the students of the Portico to have hung with more pleasure on the lips of Plato, than we often did upon the words of this magnificent man. I have known students the most indolent, of the most superficial and desultory habits of study, to have their attention awakened, and held without weariness throughout the recitation; and they have gone away with more satisfactory knowledge, and that more powerfully interwoven with the web of mind, than if they had devoted days to the closest study of the best text-books. He seemed to give them intense glimpses of their own minds, and reveal to them capabilities in themselves, of which they never dreamed before. Thus, he led them to cultivate proper habits of thought and study far more successfully, than by the imposition

of diffieult tasks, and the infliction of punishment for their non-performanee.

And, is not this failure to explain and illustrate a subjeet, so as to make it interesting and attraetive to the student, that which peoples duncedom with so many learned fools? It is difficult to become proficient in any study, unless it is pursued *con amore*. Abuse, railings, black-mark, and floggings, never made a good scholar. Teach the student to love his book, because he understands and appreciates its principles and beauties, and then the fear will be, not that he will study too little, but too much.

For text-books, the doctor had little use, farther than to suggest subjects for thought and remark, and afford a plan rather than subject-matter in its detail for private study. In the course of one recitation, he would give you the outlines of a far better text-book, than any within your acquaintance. In explaining and enlarging upon the study before you, he talks in an apparently loose and rambling manner, but every word tells. His sentences are brief and terse. They shoot like tongues of flame into the subject, and its deepest mysteries are bared to your gaze. There is no transcendentalism about him; not the smallest bit of moonshine. All is clear daylight, without fog, and unclouded.

The most abstruse principles and definitions lose their mystery and abstractness, and almost seem common-place, from the ease with which they are understood. It is as though one stood on Mount Blanc at sunrise. Below, mountain and valley are lost in the fogs of the morning; but, as the clouds retreat before the sunbeams, mountain after mountain reveals its summit; the craggy steeps are seen: the valley, with its cataracts, and streams, and villages, lies defined in minute outline, until the whole lovely panorama of mountains and torrents, and towns, rivers, and groves, and vineyards, and forests, all glowing in the morning sunshine, spreads out a boundless vision of magnificence and splendor.

I think, I see him now. (On account of some affection of the head, he usually wore his hat during his recitation.) His head is moving irregularly, his eyes flashing with thought, his whole body sympathizing with the movements of his mind. Those who have witnessed his pulpit efforts, have been impressed as by a man of gigantic powers; but those who have not known him in the recitation-room, are not prepared adequately to appreciate the man. In the pulpit he appears in all the awful energy of a great soul thoroughly aroused; an ocean stirred in its mightiest depths by fierce winds; a Vesuvius in eruption. In his professor's chair, he

appears in all the quiet calmness of a great soul in repose; the ocean in calm, with the beautiful heavens mirrored in its depths; the volcano without the eruption, clad with vines and purple fruitage, yet lifting itself from the vale in all the serene grandeur of the Italian mountain.

We should notice his strange and interesting criticisms on books and authors. They were full of wit, discrimination, learning and power. I have often waded through the pages of a long review article, without obtaining half so much insight into the merits of a book or author, as were sometimes contained in a few of his weighty sentences. Occasionally he would show up the defects of a book; and then, shades of Jeffrey and Gifford! such merciless handling, such crushing exposure of unphilosophical statements, improper definitions, and puerile absurdities! Woe to the book over which the breath of his criticism passed in censure! It was like a western prairie after the passage over it of consuming flames. It was left "utterly wasted, and withered by the tide of fire he rolled over it." You felt, not only a sense of the entire defectiveness of the work, but a kind of pitying contempt for the author.

We must not suppose from this, that he was harsh or unkind to modest mediocrity. He willingly honored any one of however meagre talents, who honestly strove to fill the sphere for which they fitted him; but when he saw dullness aspire to leadership — a man without one clear idea in his head writing text-books on the exact sciences, the ass in lion's skin — his indignation was stirred; and with a few brief, sharp, emphatic sentences, he scattered his pretensions to the winds; and if complaint was made, he seemed to answer with old Dr. South, "If owls do not wish to be hooted at, let them keep on the inner boughs." What a magnificent review writer he would have made! His criticisms would have been read with avidity, and have given him a distinguished, if not the first, position among American critics. Oh, if such a purifier of literature could arise now, and be induced to enter heartily upon his work, what a change would come over the spirit of many an inflated author's dream. How many, who are now ranked among the literati, would be sunk to their proper level! How would pretentious stupidity be hooted into obscurity! Much that men now call literature, would be considered little better than useless trash; intellectual food fit only for the maw of a fool. He would strip off the peacock feathers, in which so many modern quacks strut about, and reveal the true jackdaw to the contempt and hisses of an outraged public. If the criticisms of such a man were to sweep over the literature of this

land, the shores of the great deep of letters, would be literally strewn with stranded books. We need a review exercising such an influence as the Edinburgh Review exerted for many years after it was first established; and we need a Bascom to edit it. Then we might expect a literature worthy of our nation and our age.

But, to return: one thing we especially note, was the readiness of the doctor at repartee. Several witty members of my class were in the habit of indulging their wit at the expense of the good-humored professors. When we began our recitations with the doctor, they expected to continue their sallies. They tried it but once. One flash of his eagle-eye, one sharp sarcastic reply, accompanied by one significant shake of his finger, was enough. They cowered before him, and looked as though it would have been unspeakable relief to have crept from the room. His retorts were perfectly withering. He left his enemy literally peeled from head to foot. Yet, they only came when provoked, and where only bestowed where he thought they were deserved, and where no other instrumentality would have accomplished his end so well. He always retorted in excellent humor, so that, however cutting the retort, the student was not offended. He manifested usually a spirit of great kindness to all the class. He proved to each that he was deeply interested in his welfare; and thus bound himself to them by the strongest ties. He took no delight in searching out and displaying the weak points in a student; he sought rather to discover and develop whatever traits were redeeming in him. That mental constitution, whose strange versatility seems to have fitted him for every sphere he was called to fill, made him the best of instructors The impressions received, during my attendance in his department, are linked indissolubly with my being; and, while thought lives in the temple of the soul, will they remain — flashes of pure intelligence — fruitage from the tree of intellect.

BASCOM AS AN AUTHOR.

We might fill many pages of this work by copying eulogistic notices of Bascom's book of sermons, but we shall give place to but two — the first from a secular, the other from a religious paper. To the latter is appended an extract from the work itself, which is also admitted:

Dr. Bascom's Sermons.—It has long been the desire of the friends of this distinguished divine, that his pulpit performances, which have been the theme of such universal admiration, and the subject of a world-wide fame, should be secured to the public in some more permanent and tangible form than their mere inscriptions upon the tablet of memory. This has at length been done, and a neat volume, containing twelve of his most popular discourses, is now issued from the press of Morton & Griswold, in this city.

We have long been familiar with the peculiar style of eloquence of Dr. Bascom. Unlike the dull and meaningless formalties of school-taught manner and gesticulation, and yet exhibiting a most exquisite finish, both in word and action, he has frequently appeared to us as almost '*sui generis*' in the list of American orators. His personal physique demonstrates him one of Nature's noblest conceptions of a man, while his mind exhibits in his speech a ponderousness, not of manner but of thought, which rolls from the speaker like an avalanche descending the mountain gorge, and sweeping all before it. If the future historian, in recording the astounding intellectual achievements of the present age, shall arrive at the scriptural conclusion that 'there were giants in those days,' we opine that the Doctor's book will demonstrate that there was a Hercules among the giants.

We have but hastily glanced through the work, and yet we have read enough to convince us, that the learned author has fully imparted, both himself and the spirit of his calling to the printed page. There is a kind of Gothic grandeur, a massiveness of

intellectual wealth displayed unequalled in any publication of the age.

With all our admiration of the talents of the author, we cordially agree in the sentiment of a distinguished doctor of divinity, with whom we have conversed on the subject, that "we have never known the man so well before."

Bascom is the ecclesiastical Macaulay of this country, and we doubt not his book is destined to as wide a circulation as the works of that eminent historian.

The other says:—

Other ministers may please the fancy and excite the feelings — may instruct the judgment and impress the heart; but in addition to all this, no man that *we* have ever heard, possesses the power to wake and wield the higher powers of the soul — to captivate and control the imagination, like Dr. Bascom.

With this reputation for pulpit eloquence, it was thought by many, and predicted by some, that the written and read sermons of Dr. Bascom would fall below his fame, and disappoint the public mind. But we venture to predict the reverse will be the result.

In listening to him from the pulpit, the mind is so occupied with the impressiveness of his manner, the loftiness of his conceptions, the sublimity of his style, and the unremitted splendor of his incessant imagery, that it is utterly impossible to appreciate and digest one half that he says; so that, at the close of one of his sermons, the hearer may compare himself to a traveler, who, with railroad speed, may have passed, in a very short time, a thousand magnificent cities, or as many charming landscapes, without stopping long enough to learn the names of the one, or define the beauties of the other. In reading his sermons, the circumstances will be materially and favorably changed, both for the writer and the reader, so far as appreciation and benefit are concerned. In this performance, the reader may frequently pause to survey, and then again put forth his collected energies to grasp the mighty conceptions of the writer; and he will find material enough on many a page, if not in many a paragraph for an exercise of this sort.

In regard to the *style* of Dr. Bascom, the reader will find it to combine the *beauty* of Young, the *strength* of Wesley, the *eloquence* of Chalmers, and the *sublimity* of Hall — without, perhaps, any of their imperfections. We should think, that in forming his style, the Dr. had read, if not studied closely, the writings of Dr. Chalmers There is a considerable similarity between these writers; especially in the beautiful imagery which they employ, and in the various

figures of speech which they use, particularly in the frequent instances of *alliteration* which abound in their discourses. But we unhesitatingly give the palm to Dr. Bascom. The style of Dr Chalmers is flowing, that of Dr. Bascom is overwhelming. The one is soft and splendid, the other is glowing and magnificent. The style of Dr. Chalmers may be represented by a *volume of cloud*, floating beautifully through the heavens, borne along by a gentle breeze, and dissolving itself in copious showers. That of Dr. Bascom may be represented by the same cloud, impelled before a mighty wind, and frequently changing before its aspects, emitting lightning and thunder in its progress, but discharging abundant showers at the same time, and finally retiring, (to use one of his own expressions) "orbed in the rainbow of splendor" — an object of interest and magnificence to all. If there be any objection to Dr. Bascom's style, it consists, perhaps, in the *length* of some of his sentences; but this is not often the case; generally, they are short and comprehensive, and many of them might be selected and published as independent aphorisms, affording foundation and food for the reflections of many an hour.

But we have said enough of the character of these sermons and their distinguished author; and now, we ask leave to present one or two specimens, that our readers may see and judge for themselves. The following is the closing paragraph of the sermon on "The Institution and Functions of the Pulpit." — Speaking of the final and full success of the Christian ministry, and the cause he pleads, he remarks: —

"He who hangs the universe on his arm, and feeds its vast family at his table, can, and will, protect and supply them. He who opposes them is like the silly Thracian, shooting his harmless arrow at a thunderbolt; for they are the heralds of a holier, a sublimer message than ever charmed the ear of earth before, and the idols and ceremonies of every other creed or worship shall be consigned to the custody of neglect, oblivion, and scorn — the moles of their desolate grottoes — the bats of their desolate temples! And when infidelity lies buried in the grave of years, epitaphed in characters of execration by the millions disabused of its sorceries, the ministry shall receive the homage of ages, and share the admiration of a virtuous universe! Ministers of every creed and name — of every color and clime — are imperceptibly wearing, falling, and dropping into the ranks and lines of Christian enterprise and evangelical reform; and soon will they present an extended front of bristling bayonets, the gates of hell cannot resist! The pulpit has survived the tempest which has covered the ocean of time with shipwreck. It has stood like a column, erect among ruins — an edifice unshaken and undefaced amid the surrounding overthrow of palaces and temples — peering like the magnetic rod, around which the lightnings of heaven play, but cannot harm — and the lamp of

its glory, as the Pharas of the world, shall live and burn immortal and undimmed!

"It is thus the ministry under God shall spoil principalities and powers, making a show of them openly, as the spoils of battle and the trophies of conquest. Thrones shall crumble and dynasties fall, and altars and temples shall rise to repair the desolation and perpetuate the change! Headed by the great Captain of their salvation, they shall victoriously push the conquests of the cross from Zembla to Cape Horn, and from the Equator to either pole, until the religion of the Bible — the only glory of the pulpit — orbed in the rainbow of her own grandeur, and throned in celestial light, shall hold her culminating point in the heavens, and everywhere shed her redeeming radiance on the evening of the world!"

We have only room for one more brief extract from the sermon on "Heaven," in which are contrasted the sorrows of time with the joys of eternity: —

"This is a state of pupilage and probation, that of dignity and promotion. Here is conflict, there, victory. This is the race, that, the goal. Here we suffer, there, we reign. Here we are in exile, there, at home. How striking the contrast! . What did Moses care for the perils of the wilderness, when, from the storm-defying steep of Pisgah, he viewed the land of promise, imaging forth the green fields of Heaven's eternal Spring! — Look at Elijah, the immortal Tishbite, exchanging the sighs and solitude of his juniper shade, for wheels of fire and steeds of wind that bore him home to God! Look at Paul — poor, periled and weary amid the journeyings and conflicts of his mission; the hand that once stretched the strong eastern tent, or wore the dungeon's chain, now sweeps, in boldest strain, the harps of heaven! What cared the holy John for his banishment into the rocky sea-girt Patmos, when his residence there was overshadowed by the flight of angels, and he looked forward to Heaven as furnishing the rewards of persecution — and what does he now care for the edicts of Nero, and the cruelty of Rome! . What has earth of rich or rare — the gems of the Orient, the mines of Golconda, the rose and the glory of Cashmere — that must not want attraction, and be poor indeed, when Heaven's undying freshness mantles, and her eternal columns rise in grandeur to the eye! What think you Pisidia's martyr — the murdered Stephen — cared for his toils, his travel, and his watchings; or even the stoning of the bigot mob, when the magnificent pomp of opening Heaven, with the vision of the crucified, tranced his wondering senses into awe!

"*The want and suffering of earth are exchanged for the celestial joys and service of the Heaven, whither we journey.*"

One of the few things written by him for the periodical press, is his description of the cataract of Niagara, which we think proper here to append:

A CLERGYMAN'S VIEW OF NIAGARA.—In order to diversify our "Glance," we have cast an eye over the pages of the Knickerbocker for April, a bright and brilliant number, and sparkling with many a literary gem. The two most prominent, are contributions by Washington Irving, the celebrated author of the Sketch Book, and Rev. H. B. Bascom, the equally celebrated pulpit orator of the Methodist Episcopal Church. For the former, we may find a place hereafter, but the following brilliant passage from the latter — "A Sketch at Niagara" — is too good to be postponed, even for a week:

"I have seen, surveyed, and communed with the whole! — and awed and bewildered, as if enchanted before the revealment of a mystery, I attempt to write. You ask me, in your last, for some detailed, veritable account of the Falls, and I should be glad to gratify you; but how shall I essay to paint a scene, that so utterly baffles all conception, and renders worse than fruitless every attempt at description? In five minutes after my arrival on the evening of the fifth, I descended the winding-path from the 'Pavillion,' on the Canadian side, and, for the first time in my life, saw this unequaled cascade from 'Table Rock;' the whole indescribable scene, in bold outline, bursting on my view. I had heard and read much, and imagined more of what was before me. I was perfectly familiar with the often-told, the far-traveled story of what I saw; but the overpowering *reality* on which I was gazing, motionless as the rock on which I stood, deprived me of recollection, annihilated all curiosity; and with emotions of sublimity till now unfelt, and all unearthly, the involuntary exclamation escaped me, '*God of Grandeur! what a scene!*'

"But the majesty of the sight, and the interest of the moment, how depict them? The huge amplitude of water, tumbling in foam above, and dashing on, arched and pillared as it glides, until it reaches the precipice of the *chute*, and then, in one vast column, bounding with maddening roar and rush, into the depths beneath, presents a spectacle so unutterably appalling, that language falters; words are no longer signs, and I despair giving you any idea of what I saw and felt. Yet this is not all. The eye and the mind necessarily take in other objects, as parts of the grand panorama, forests, cliffs, and islands; banks, foam, and spray; wood, rock, and precipice: dimmed with the rising fog and mist, and obscurely gilded by the softening tints of the rainbow. These all belong to the picture; and the effect of the whole is immeasurably heightened by the noise of the cataract, now reminding you of the reverberations of the heavens in a tempest, and then of the eternal roar of ocean, when angered by the winds!

"The concave bed of rock, from which the water falls, some two hundred feet, into the almost boundless reservoir beneath, is the

section of a circle, which, at first sight, from Table Rock, presents something like the geometrical curve of the rainbow; and the wonders of the grand 'crescent,' thus advantageously thrown upon the eye in combination, and the appropriate sensations and conceptions heightened by the crash and boom of the waters, render the sight more surpassingly sublime, than anything I have ever looked upon, or conceived of. As it regards my thoughts and feelings at the time, I can help you to no conception of their character. Overwhelming astonishment was the only bond between thought and thought; and wild, and vague, and boundless, were the associations of the hour! Before me, the strength and fullness of the congregated 'lakes of the north,' were enthroned and concentrated, within a circumference embraced by a single glance of the eye! Here I saw, rolling and dashing, at the rate of *twenty-five hundred millions of tons per day*, nearly one half of all the fresh water upon the surface of the globe! On the American side, I beheld a vast deluge, nine hundred feet in breadth, with a fall of one hundred and eighty or ninety, met, fifty feet above the level of the gulf, by a huge projection of rock, which seems to break the descent and continuity of the flood, only to increase its fierce and overwhelming bound. And turning to the 'crescent,' I saw the mingled rush of foam and tide, dashing with fearful strife and desperate emulation — four hundred yards of the sheet rough and sparry, and the remaining three hundred a deep sealike mass of living green — rolling and heaving like a sheet of emerald. Even imagination failed me, and I could think of nothing but ocean let loose from his bed, and seeking a deeper gulf below! The fury of the water, at the termination of its fall, combined with the columned strength of the cataract, and the deafening thunder of the flood, are at once inconceivable and indescribable. No imagination, however creative, can correspond with the grandeur of the reality.

"I have already mentioned, and it is important that you keep it in view, the ledge of rock, the verge of the cataract, rising like a wall of equal height, and extending in semicircular form across the whole bed of the river, a distance of more than two thousand feet; and the impetuous flood, conforming to this arrangement, in making its plunge, with mountain weight, into the great horse-shoe basin beneath, exhibits a spectacle of the sublime, in geographical scenery, without, perhaps, a parallel in nature. As I leaned over Table Rock, and cast my eye downward upon the billowy turbulence of the angry depth, where the waters were tossing and whirling, coiling and springing, with the energy of an earthquake, and a rapidity that almost mocked my vision, I found the scene sufficient to appal a sterner spirit than mine; and I was glad to turn away and relieve my mind by a sight of the surrounding scenery; bays, islands, shores, and forests, everywhere receding in due perspective. The rainbows of the 'crescent' and American side, which are only visible from the western bank of the Niagara, and in the afternoon, seem to diminish somewhat from the awfulness of the scene, and to give it an aspect of rich and mellow grandeur, not unlike the bow of promise, throwing its assuring radiance over the retiring waters of the deluge."

BRIGHT'S FAMILY PRACTICE.

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Recommendations from the Medical Faculty of the University of Louisville.

LOUISVILLE, August, 1847.

Dear Sir—Having bestowed on an attentive examination of your "FAMILY PRACTICE" all the leisure I can command, I am of the opinion that, with the addition of the word WELL, which I shall take the liberty of making, I cannot better characterize it than you yourself have done, in your very modest and appropriate title-page, "A Plain System of Medical Practice, WELL adapted to the use of Families."

The work appears to me to be thus adapted, for the following reasons:—

1. The matter it contains is sound and judicious, and sufficiently full and diversified for all the cases of disease in which families themselves should attempt to employ it. When more is needed, recourse should be had to professional aid.

2. The descriptions of diseases are generally correct, and their changes and stages well marked; and the style of the work is so simple and perspicuous, that no one at all acquainted with the English composition can misapprehend its meaning.

3. The compass of the work, embracing as it does every form of disease which an American Physician, in full practice, can expect to encounter in a lifetime, is sufficiently ample.

Wishing it, therefore, the reception and circulation, to which it appears to me to be entitled, I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

CH. CALDWELL, M.D.,

Professor of the Institutes of Medicine and Medical Jurisprudence.

P. S. Were it not that comparisons are apt to be held exceptionable, I would not hesitate to say, that I consider your "FAMILY PRACTICE" the most valuable work of the sort of which I have any knowledge. C. C.

BRIGHT'S FAMILY PRACTICE.

I have examined Dr. Bright's "FAMILY PRACTICE," and feel assured that it is, on the whole, well adapted to the purpose for which it is written. I think the work is calculated to be eminently useful
August, 1847 S. D. GROSS, M. D., Professor of Surgery.

I concur in the estimate expressed above by Dr. Gross.

H. MILLER, M. D.,
Professor of Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children.

I have examined "BRIGHT'S FAMILY PRACTICE" with some care, and find that it is plainly written, and contains much that is valuable. I believe the work is calculated to do much good. J. COBB, M. D., Professor of Anatomy.

I have examined Dr. Bright's "FAMILY PRACTICE," and find it what it purports to be—a plain system of Medical Practice—which I can conscientiously recommend to families. L. P. YANDELL, M. D., Professor of Physiology.

From Practising Physicians in Louisville.

I have examined with care Dr. Bright's "FAMILY PRACTICE," and find it a valuable work, well suited to the use of Planters and Families. It is plain and comprehensive, and the treatment conformable to the latest and most approved practice, and it affords me much pleasure to recommend it to the public. J. C. GUNN, M. D.

I have examined "BRIGHT'S FAMILY PRACTICE." The work is not only the result of long experience, but a very judicious selection of the latest and most approved Medical authors, and will, no doubt, be of great service to families. W C. GALT, M. D.

I have examined "BRIGHT'S FAMILY PRACTICE," and do most unhesitatingly recommend it as a plain, practical work—useful to families. C. PIRTLE, M. D.

I have examined "BRIGHT'S FAMILY PRACTICE," and take great pleasure in recommending it as a valuable work, suitable to the use of Families. Having practised Medicine fifteen years in Mississippi and Louisiana, I view this work as better adapted to the diseases of that region than any work of the kind I have ever seen.
RICHARD ANGEL, M. D.

We have examined Dr. Bright's "FAMILY PRACTICE," and feel no hesitation in recommending it to the public, as a book containing a variety of useful and valuable information. It is entirely practical in its designs; all technicalities are avoided, so as to render the author's meaning clear and plain to the unprofessional reader, for whom it is more particularly intended than for the profession, though the latter, and particularly the medical student, might increase his store of practical knowledge by a careful perusal of its pages. Dr. Bright's instruments for the application of caustic to the mouth of the uterus are ingenious, and no doubt will save the practitioner much trouble, and the patient a great deal of unnecessary pain. U. E. EWING, M. D.
Louisville, June, 1847. W. T. H. WINLOCK, M. D.

I have examined "BRIGHT'S FAMILY PRACTICE," and find in it plain and imporant practical principles in medicine, well adapted to the use of families.
WM. A. McDOWELL, M. D.

I have examined "BRIGHT'S FAMILY PRACTICE," and take pleasure in recommend ing it to all persons as a valuable work—in particular to families in the country.
Louisville, June, 1847 J. W. KNIGHT, M. D.

We have examined the medical work written by J. W. Bright, and take pleasure in recommending it to the public, as a work well calculated for the use of families.
JOHN M. TALBOT, M. D.
Louisville, June 18, 1847. W. H. WAKEFIELD, M. D.

DR. BRIGHT: Dear Sir—I have looked into your work at such moments as my urgent labors for the season would afford me. It appears to be a work of great research, and is doubtless one of high merit. It is my wish that the reading public may be most thoroughly satisfied of the high appreciation put upon it. B. W. DUDLEY, M. D.,
Lexington, Ky., Feb. 5, 1848. Prof. of Surgery in Transylvania University.

BRIGHT'S FAMILY PRACTICE.

From Physicians in Memphis.

After a careful examination of Dr. Bright's "FAMILY PRACTICE," I have no hesitation in saying, that the practical precepts recommended by the Author are better adapted to the treatment of disease, as it prevails at the Southwest, than any other work of a similar character, with which I am acquainted. GEO. R. GRANT, M. D.,
Professor of Theory and Practice of Medicine in the Memphis Medical College.

From the cursory examination which I have been enabled to make of Dr. Bright's work on the Practice of Physic, I have no hesitation in saying, that it is the best production of its kind now published. E. F. WATKINS, M. D.
Memphis, Sept. 1, 1847.

We have examined Dr. Bright's "PLAIN SYSTEM OF MEDICAL PRACTICE," and are satisfied that it is better calculated for a safe guide to Families—especially those remote from a scientific physician—than any other work on Domestic Practice. We can therefore cheerfully recommend it as a plain and valuable work; in the main, well adapted to the purposes designed. LEWIS SHANKS, M. D.
Memphis, Sept. 1, 1847. JNO. R. FRAYSER, M. D.

From Physicians in Illinois.

Having been requested to examine "BRIGHT'S FAMILY PRACTICE," I have satisfied myself that it is superior to any work of the kind which has met my notice, both in its description of diseases and principles of treatment. HENRY WING, M. D.,
March 6, 1848. Prof. of Mat. Med., in Jacksonville Med. Coll., Ill.

TO THE PUBLIC.—Having examined Dr. Bright's "FAMILY PRACTICE OF MEDICINE" attentively, I have no hesitation in stating, that it is the best work of the kind now extant, in the English language, and is admirably adapted to the wants of western people.
Lexington, Morgan Co., Ill., March 8, 1848. C. H. KNIGHT, M. D.

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